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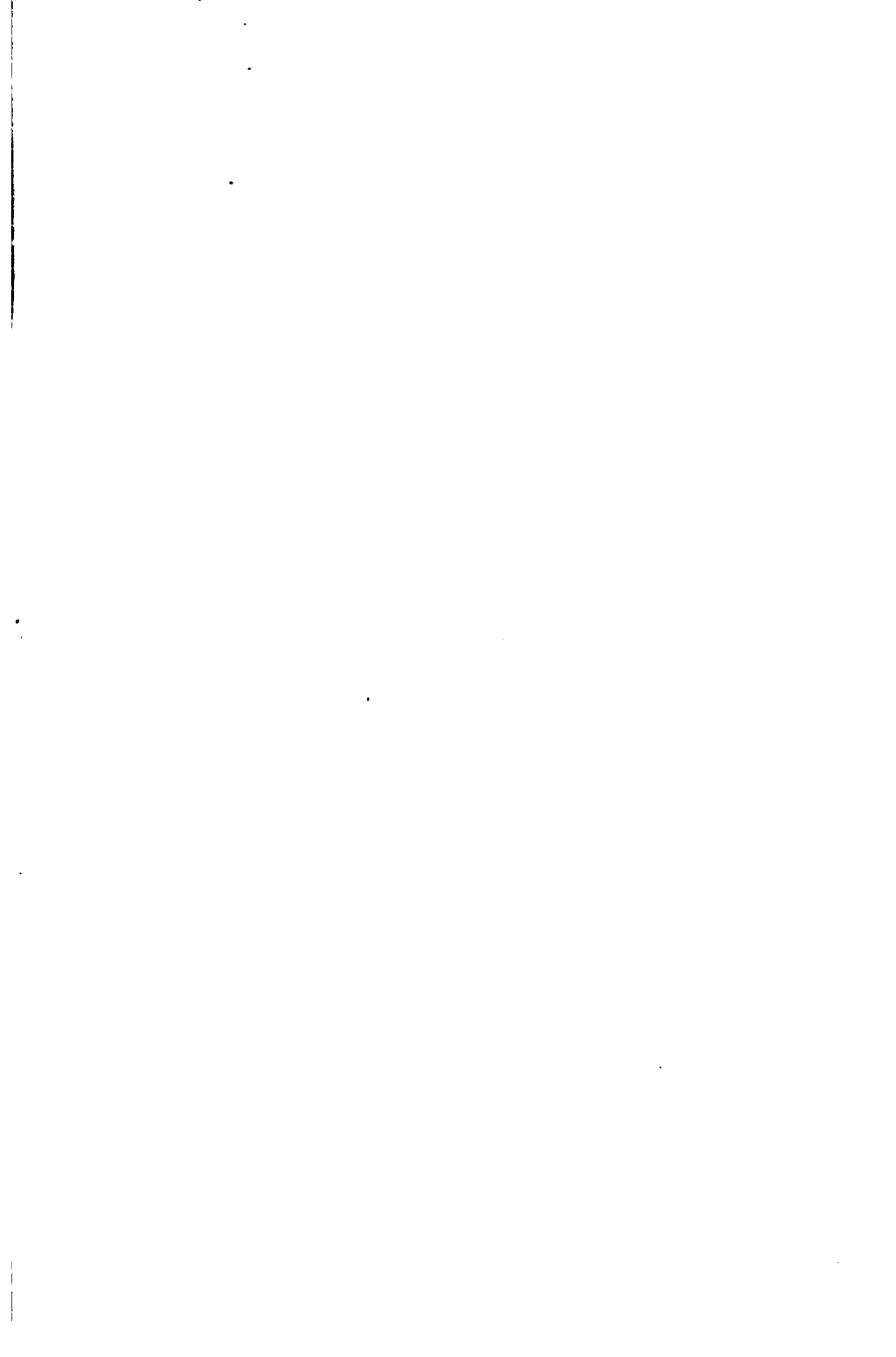
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# VENEZUELA

*A LAND WHERE IT'S ALWAYS SUMMER*

BY

WILLIAM ELEROY CURTIS

AUTHOR OF "THE CAPITALS OF SPANISH AMERICA" ETC.

WITH A MAP



NEW YORK

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS

1896

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TO  
GEORGE KEPLER CURTIS  
THIS WORK  
IS INSCRIBED WITH A FATHER'S AFFECTION



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# MAP OF

# VENEZUELA

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TABAGO I.

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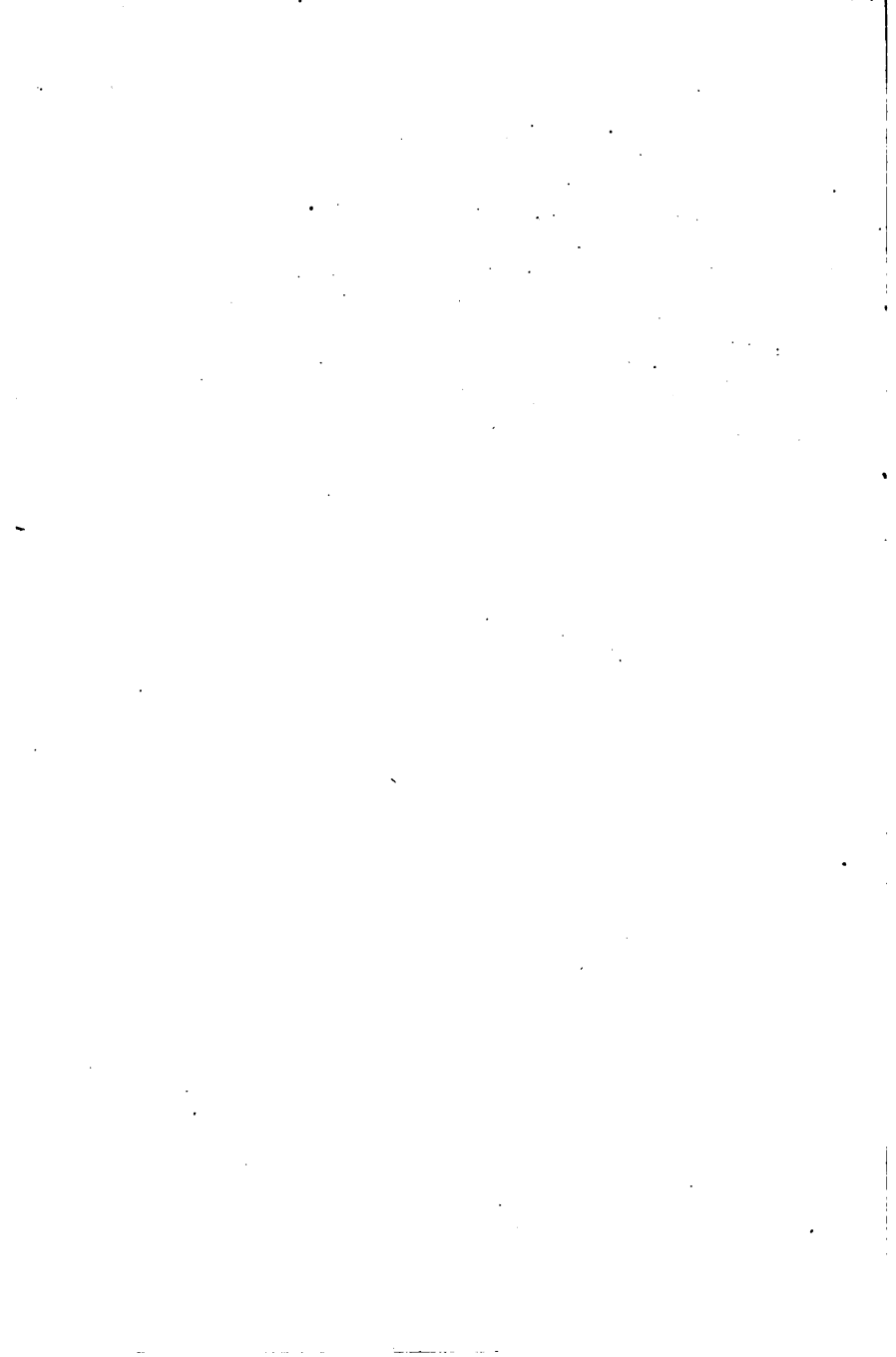
Scale of Miles.

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Statute Miles.

Explanations.

--- Extreme English pretensions  
--- Proposed line of arbitration

~~~~~ Rojas' line  
~~~~~ Fortigue line



# VENEZUELA

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## CHAPTER I

### DESCRIPTIVE AND HISTORICAL

ON the 20th of May, 1499, a fleet of four vessels left the harbor of Cadiz bound for the Indies. It had been chartered and equipped by rich merchants of Seville, and was commanded by a young Castilian knight named Alonzo de Ojeda, who had been with Columbus on his second voyage, and whose adventures in Hispaniola were the talk of all Spain. Second in command was Juan de la Cosa. He was formerly the pilot or chief mate of Columbus, and comes down in history as the author of the first map of the New World, which he drew upon an ox-hide. The original still hangs upon the walls of the Marine Museum in Madrid.

Another of the party—whether a passenger or a partner in the enterprise is not wholly clear—was a Florentine merchant with a taste for geography and literature. As manager of the commission-house of Juanoto Berardi at Seville he had furnished the supplies for Columbus's fleet, and afterwards obtained an official position under Ferdinand and Isabella. They called him the Chief Pilot of the Indies, and gave him a salary of about \$2000 gold, which

was a large sum in those days. It was his duty to superintend the fitting out and embarkation of vessels that were intending to cross the sea. In 1501 he wrote an elaborate account of this voyage and a description of the lands he visited for the information of Lorenzo de' Medici, then reigning at Florence, his native city. It was published in Latin, Italian, and French, and a copy fell into the hands of Martin Waldseemüller, of Saint-Dié, who printed it as an appendix to his *Cosmographia*, and suggested that the author, "being a man of great learning and sagacious mind," was entitled to the distinction of having the lands he described called by his name. Acting upon this impulse, Waldseemüller wrote "America" across the map, where it has since remained.

The little fleet cruised up and down the coast of South America from the mouth of the Orinoco to the Isthmus of Panama, and when it entered the Lake of Maracaibo the voyagers found the natives living in huts of palms and rushes built over the water and supported by piles. Whenever they went visiting they used a canoe. This reminded the eager imagination of Americus Vespucci and his companions of the palaces and gondolas of Venice; hence they called the country Venezuela—Little Venice—and the name has clung to it ever since. The Maracaibo Indians still live as they did four hundred years ago, in villages built over the shallow waters of the lake, but they speak Spanish now, and are pretty well civilized.

Ojeda established the first colony of Europeans upon the continent of America at the present site of Cartagena, Colombia, where there is a magnificent harbor, and placed in command of it Francisco Pizarro, that remarkable swineherd who afterwards overthrew the Inca empire in Peru. A little farther westward another village was lo-



cated in charge of Nuñez de Balboa, who discovered the Pacific Ocean from one of the mountains of Darien, and was making preparations to explore it when he was beheaded by a jealous rival. Pizarro was the man who arrested Balboa, his friend and patron, and thus obtained an opportunity to explore the South Seas himself.

King Ferdinand made Ojeda governor of all the north coast of South America. He called it New Andalusia, but, as distinguished from the islands, it was better known as the Spanish Main. After enduring hardships and sufferings for which modern exploration offers no comparison, Ojeda was driven away by the savages, and returned bankrupt and broken-hearted to Santo Domingo, where he died soon after, begging with his last breath to be buried under the threshold of the cathedral, that all who passed inward or outward might tread upon his bones.

Columbus explored the eastern coast, and in the Gulf of Paria, where were extensive oyster-beds, he found pearls, which with the natives were so plentiful as to be considered of little value. When the Spaniards in Santo Domingo learned this they rushed across the Caribbean Sea, and treated the Indians so cruelly that all the aboriginal tribes along the Spanish Main united to resist the invasion. For forty years the struggle was prolonged, and Charles V. assisted his subjects by issuing a royal decree that the native population should be reduced to bondage. It was his Christian majesty's command that every captured Indian, man, woman, or child, should be branded upon the forehead with a hot iron, and that the mark should be the initial of his own name—the letter "C." Resistance was to be punished with death. In the enforcement of this order the whole north coast of South America was slippery with the

blood of innocents, who died by thousands defending their lives and their liberty.

Charles V. once sold the entire province to the Velsers of Augsburg, who were the richest merchants of that time, and traded in all parts of the world. They agreed to fortify three harbors and build two cities within two years, and to send over an army and colonies of emigrants, provided the king would give them a grant of so much territory, and allow them to enslave the natives. They made desperate attempts to carry out their part of the contract, and the cruelties Alfinger, their German agent, practised upon the Indians surpassed anything of which the Spaniards were guilty. To prevent the unhappy slaves from escaping he chained them together in gangs of ten or twelve, with iron rings welded around their necks. Thus they marched and toiled and slept together until death separated them. When one became too weak to work or to march with the rest, they cut his head off with a sword and let the body drop out to save the trouble of driving the whole gang to a blacksmith.

Finally even nature rebelled, and a series of earthquakes and hurricanes reduced all the young settlements to ruins. The Spanish and German colonists and soldiers died in droves from starvation and the fevers they caught in the swamps; but disease and suffering rendered them only the more fierce and desperate, and for every European that died a thousand of the aborigines were sacrificed. The natives were almost exterminated. Those who survived were driven into the interior, and in 1567 Diego de Losada, a Castilian knight, succeeded in locating a colony in the beautiful valley behind the coast range of mountains, and called it Santiago Leon de Caracas—St. James, the lion of Caracas—the latter being the name of the Indian

tribe which had formerly occupied that part of the country.

For two hundred and forty years Venezuela remained loyal to the Spanish crown and obeyed the orders of the captain-general who ruled the province in the name of the king, although the policy of the government was selfish and repressive. The people were allowed no privileges. The ordinary liberties that were accorded the other American colonies were not accorded them. They were not permitted to engage in manufacturing nor to trade with any country except Spain. The arts and sciences and all forms of industry except agriculture were discouraged, and the export of the most profitable crops—sugar, coffee, and cocoa—was retained as a government monopoly. Every producer was required to sell his surplus to the officials, who fixed their own prices. The people thus found it to their advantage to raise no more than was actually needed for local consumption. Those who were so unfortunate as to accumulate property were punished by excessive taxation and forced loans, and only those who had nothing were left unmolested by the rapacious representatives of the church and the king. The latter were paid enormous salaries and allowed whatever perquisites they could pick up in the way of fines and penalties and plunder. All the officials were imported from Spain, and they were usually impecunious favorites at court, who, after two or three years of this profitable exile, were enabled to return to Spain with comfortable fortunes. A large military garrison and police force were maintained at the expense of the colony to protect the officials from the vengeance of those who suffered from their exactions; few public improvements were made; the people were kept in a state of the densest ignorance; there were no schools outside

the monasteries and convents ; no books could be imported without the express permission of the captain-general, and Venezuela never saw a printing-press until after the revolution of 1811.

This oppressive policy prevailed under the form of law until the intelligent people of the province became exasperated, and in 1806, Francisco Miranda, who had served upon the staff of Washington in the North American revolution, and with the French patriots in '98, raised the standard of rebellion. But the time was not ripe. Renewed exactions and greater oppression followed the failure of the insurrection, which fanned the flame of revolt and nourished aspirations for liberty until July 5, 1811, when an assembly of the most responsible and influential men in Caracas proclaimed a republic and adopted a constitution modelled upon that of the United States. Ten years of bloody war ended in the expulsion of the Spanish army from the province, but it was not until 1847, twenty-six years later, that a treaty of peace was signed and the government of Spain formally acknowledged the independence of Venezuela.

The Republic of Colombia, which was composed of Venezuela, New Granada, and Ecuador, under the presidency of Simon Bolivar, fell to pieces in 1830 after his death, and Venezuela organized an independent government, with the conservative or clerical party, who were his enemies, in power. They were overthrown in 1847, when the liberal party secured the government and held it until 1858. During this period Venezuela made great progress under the administration of two brothers, José Tadeo and Jose Gregorio Monagas, who alternately occupied the presidential chair for several terms. Jose Gregorio emancipated the slaves in 1854, nine years before the proclamation of

President Lincoln, and also suffered a martyr's fate. From 1870 to 1889, Antonio Guzman Blanco, who is perhaps the most remarkable man the republic has produced except Bolivar, ruled with a hand of iron and blood, and, actuated by mixed motives of pride and patriotism, avarice and vanity, introduced many improvements. Since he retired from power and went to Paris to reside he has attempted at times to interfere with the government, with disastrous results; and there has been an unfortunate series of political outbreaks, occasioned by the rivalry of ambitious individuals rather than differences concerning administrative policy. In fact, the history of Venezuela, since that beautiful land was discovered, has been a prolonged series of cruelties, massacres, wars, and revolutions, with brief intervals of peace and prosperity. It has been the most turbulent of all the Latin-American republics, and although the scene of the first civilization upon the American continent, and the first to declare for civil liberty, its people have been allowed to enjoy very little of either.

Venezuela is a little more than twice as large as Texas. One has an area of 597,960 and the other 262,290 square miles. It has 1047 rivers, of which 436 are affluents of the Orinoco, and 230 empty into the Caribbean Sea. Six of these rivers are navigable for large steamers, and the Orinoco is the second in size in South America, and the fourth river of the world. The Amazon, the Mississippi, and the Yang-tse of China only surpass it in length and the volume of water carried into the sea. The Orinoco is three miles wide at a distance of 600 miles from its mouth, and at the city of Bolivar, the head of tide-water, it is sixty fathoms deep. Venezuela has a coast-line of more than 2000 miles, with thirty-two natural harbors and fifty bays. The largest of these, Lake Maracaibo, has an area

of 2100 square miles. There is one lake in the interior near Valencia, at an elevation of 1692 feet above the sea, which is a natural phenomenon, and covers an area of sixty-six square miles.

There are three systems of mountains: the Andes, which extend to the coast of the Caribbean Sea, have several peaks over 15,000 feet high; the range which runs parallel with the coast nearly the entire distance attains its greatest height near Caracas, and may be seen at a distance of seventy miles at sea; the Parima range, in the interior, traverses the country east and west, and forms the southern limit of the agricultural zone. Its highest peak reaches about 8000 feet. The snow line in Venezuela begins at 13,570 feet above the sea. Beyond that altitude all vegetation ceases.

About one-third of the entire territory is agricultural land, nearly one-half is pastoral, and the remainder is covered with forests that are unmeasured and practically unexplored. But a very small proportion of the agricultural land is under cultivation, most of it along the coast. In the interior are vast herds of cattle, numbering perhaps ten millions, although there has never been an accurate census. Sheep-raising has never been undertaken to any extent, although the mountain ranges furnish good pasturage.

There is a choice of climate—three zones, as they are called, varying in temperature from perpetual summer to eternal winter. Along the coast is the first zone, or *tierra caliente*, where the thermometer seldom goes below 85° in the shade, and usually lingers in the neighborhood of 100°. This is the land of the banana, the pineapple, the sugarcane, the palm, the cocoa, the cocoanut, and the orchid. The next zone is the *tierra templada*, comprising the table-

lands and foot-hills, from 2000 to 7000 feet in altitude, where the climate is like perennial spring, where it is June from January to December, and where coffee as well as all the fruits, vegetables, and cereals of the temperate latitude are grown. Then, farther up the Andes, is the *tierra fria*, on the edges of which the cattle browse; but above them snow lies always, even under the equatorial sun.

Beyond the mountains, running parallel with the coast, is the Orinoco, connected with the Amazon by an intersecting stream. It drains a third of the continent, and its valley is one of the richest in the world, although developed to but a small degree and partially unexplored. To reach the Orinoco one must go eastward along the coast to the British island of Trinidad, where, at the town of Port-of-Spain, he will find a steamer sailing weekly through one of the channels of the delta up the main stream to the several settlements scattered along its shores. The chief of them is Ciudad Bolivar, formerly known as Angostura, which gave its name to a brand of popular bitters. Beyond the Orinoco to the southward are vast forests and savannahs, of extent unknown; and eastward, nearer the Atlantic, are the mining regions, in which are some of the richest deposits of gold in the world. A journey up the Orinoco upon one of the good steamboats that ply its waters, owned by Yankees and manned by Yankee crews, is as fascinating as a voyage up the Nile, and can be made from New York in about six weeks, at an expense of not more than three or four hundred dollars.

The chief towns of Venezuela are Caracas, the capital, and La Guayra, its seaport, which is twenty-four miles by rail around a mighty mountain; Valencia, which lies upon a curious lake, one of the most interesting of natural phenomena; Puerto Cabello, where Sir Francis Drake died, and

was dropped into the water with a bag of shot at his heels; and Maracaibo, upon the lake of the same name, from which we get much of our coffee.

The population of the republic is about two and a half millions, not including 260,000 Indians, who are mostly peaceful; and there are nine states, one federal district, and five territories. Six states are named in honor of men who have been conspicuous in their history — Bolivar, Falcon, Miranda, Lara, Bermudez, and Zamora; with Carabobo, which commemorates the winning battle for independence, Zulia, and Los Andes, the mountain region. These states are organized and governed very much like those of our own country, being independent in the management of their own local affairs, but "united we stand, divided we fall," so far as they relate to each other.

The country is still in a primitive and comparatively undeveloped condition. Outside the principal cities and a few isolated sections like those where the mines are, it has made little progress since the yoke of Spain was thrown off, and the population is believed to be less than it was then.

There is no fever to dread, for that is confined to the jungles. Near Caracas, where the Andes turn to the eastward and dip their feet in the sea, the atmosphere is as pure and sweet and the climate as healthful as can be found in any mountain land. The coast towns are hot, always; but you step from the steamer into a railway car, and climb the foot-hills over railroads that are triumphs of engineering skill to altitudes where the temperature is seldom too hot and never too cold, and scarcely varies more than twenty or thirty degrees from the beginning to the end of the year. Sometimes the thermometer rises to 90° Fahrenheit, and it may dip as low as 60°, but the average



is 75°, spring, summer, autumn, and winter, and the alternating breezes from the mountains and the sea make the climate such that both the robust and the delicate may enjoy it.

Agricultural and industrial development has been retarded by political revolutions and a lack of labor and capital, but the property of foreigners who do not meddle with local affairs is seldom disturbed, and the government offers liberal inducements for colonization and investment. Manufacturing establishments are almost unknown. There is very little machinery in the country, and industry is generally carried on in the households and by the most primitive processes. There is an abundance of convenient water-power, but fuel is scarce and expensive. Therefore the future wealth of Venezuela, as well as her present prosperity, lies in the development of her agricultural resources, which are almost boundless, and her mineral deposits, which are among the richest and most accessible. Coffee is the great staple, and the product is unsurpassed.

Venezuela is the great cocoa-producing country of the world, and the Caracas chocolate has no superior.

The "Red D" line of steamers connects New York with the Venezuelan ports, and furnish as comfortable accommodations for travellers as can be found upon any except the great modern Atlantic vessels. The best time to visit Venezuela is from November to June. There are only two seasons, the wet and the dry. Nature furnishes a cloudless sky for six months in the year and a daily shower during the other six months. The rains commence in May and last until November, but the roads are generally passable until the middle of June, and often into July. From November until May not a drop of water falls. The people live out-of-doors, and the contrast to the winter in New

York or Chicago is very agreeable, particularly to those who are afflicted with pulmonary or bronchial complaints. Caracas is said to have the most even temperature and delightful climate of all the cities of South America, with the single exception of Lima, Peru. The two places are about equidistant from the equator, about the same distance from the sea, and both are sheltered by the peaks of the Andes. Although Lima possesses the greater historical interest, Caracas is the more accessible, and whoever goes there once will want to return.

When the steamer rounds Sandy Hook the bows are pointed for the little channel between Cuba and Porto Rico, called the Mona (Monkey) Strait. Then land is seen for the first time since leaving the Jersey coast—two low, barren islands, and then a lifeless rock rising out of the water. The course is changed a little to the westward, and on the sixth day from New York you enter one of the prettiest little harbors surrounded by one of the quaintest little towns in the world, on the Dutch island of Curaçoa. It looks as if a fragment of Haarlem or Zaandam had been broken off and floated over, as they say the corks do from the coast of Spain. It is cited as a curious proof of the currents of the Atlantic that the fishermen of the Antilles find sufficient cork drifted to them from the wine-growing towns along the shores of the Bay of Biscay to supply their nets, and that a bottle thrown into the sea anywhere between the Viga in Spain and the River Iambia in Africa will float steadily and regularly so many miles a day until the surf tosses it upon the beach of one of the West India islands.

The island of Curaçoa is small and barren, but has played an important part in the history of Spanish America. It has belonged at different times to England, Spain, and

Holland, and its cosey harbor has been the scene of many a bloody battle between the navies of the Old World, as well as between the pirates and buccaneers that infested the Caribbean Sea for two centuries. It has been for a hundred years and still is an asylum for political fugitives, and many of the revolutions that wrack and wreck the republics on the Spanish Main are hatched under the shelter of the pretentious but harmless fortresses that guard its port. Bolivar, Santa Aña, and many other famous men in Spanish-American history have lived there in exile, and until recently there was an imposing castle upon one of the hills called Bolivar's Tower. There the founder of five republics lived in banishment for several years, and waited for rescue.

The houses are built in the Dutch style, exactly like those of Holland; the streets are so narrow that the people can almost shake hands through their windows with the neighbors across the way, and the walls are as thick as would be needed for a fortress. The Dutch governor lives in a solemn-looking old mansion fronting the Shattagat, or lagoon that forms the harbor, guarded by a company of stupid-looking soldiers with a few old-fashioned cannon. The entire island is of phosphates, and the government receives a revenue of half a million dollars from companies that ship them away. There is not a spring or a well or any fresh water, and the inhabitants are entirely dependent upon rain-water for existence, or upon supplies brought in barrels by schooners from the Venezuelan coast, ninety miles distant. As sometimes it doesn't rain for a year or two the natural supply is often exhausted, and a glass of imported water is worth as much as the same amount of wine or beer.

Curaçoa gave its name to a celebrated liqueur that was

formerly manufactured from the peel of a peculiar species of orange growing there ; but most of the fruit trees have been destroyed by the droughts, and the supply now comes from other of the West India islands.

The inhabitants are mostly negroes. A few rich merchants representing all nationalities are said to have made their money by smuggling. It is a free port. No duties of any sort are charged, and as the amount of merchandise imported annually is about twenty-five times as much as the inhabitants can consume, and the harbor is constantly filled with little schooners that seem to be always loading and unloading, there is good ground for a belief that a contraband trade with the main coast is still going on. Each steamer leaves enough goods upon the docks at Curaçoa to last the population an entire year. What becomes of it is a question for the customs officers of Venezuela and Colombia to answer.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ANCIENT CITY OF LA GUAYRA

"So Westward Ho! they ran, beneath the mighty northern wall, the highest cliff on earth, some nine thousand feet of rock parted from the sea by a narrow strip of bright green lowland. Here and there a patch of sugar-cane or a knot of cocoanut-trees close to the water's edge reminded them that they were in the tropics; but all above was savage, rough, and bare as an Alpine precipice. Some deep clefts allowed the Southern sun to pour a blaze of light down to the sea marge, and gave glimpses far above of strange and stately trees lining the glens, and of a veil of purple mists that shrouded the inner summits. While up and down, between them and the mountain-side, white, fleecy clouds hung motionless in the burning air, increasing the impression of vastness and of solemn rest which was overpowering.

"And now the last point is rounded, and they are full in sight of the spot in quest of which they have sailed four thousand miles: a low, black cliff crowned by a wall, a battery at either end. Within, a few narrow streets of white houses running parallel to the sea, upon a strip of flat which seemed not two hundred yards in breadth, and behind, the mountain wall, covering the whole in deepest shade. How that wall was ever ascended to the inland was a puzzle; but Drew, who had been off the place before,

pointed out to them a narrow path, which wound upward through a glen, seemingly sheer perpendicular. That was the road to the capital, if any man dared try it.

"In spite of the shadow of the mountain, the whole place wore a glowing and dusty look. The breaths of air that came off the land were utterly stifling; and no wonder, for La Guayra, owing to the radiation of that vast fire-brick of heated rock, is one of the hottest places on the face of the whole earth.

"Where was the harbor? There is none; only an open roadstead wherein lay, tossing at anchor, four or five vessels. A half-mile to the eastward of the town, two or three hundred feet up the steep mountain-side, stood a large, low, long, white house, embosomed in trees and gardens. There was no other house of similar size near by. There was no room for one. And was not that the royal flag of Spain that flaunted before it? That must be the governor's house, the abode of the Rose of Torridge."

This description of the hot and quaint old city of La Guayra is copied from one of the most remarkable of novels, *Westward Ho!* by the Reverend Charles Kingsley, and its descriptions of life and scenery on the Spanish Main are unsurpassed. La Guayra looks to-day just as he pictures it to have been in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when he takes his hero, Amyas Leigh, a brawny English lad, down there to rescue his sweetheart, who has been courted and coaxed away from Devon by a Spanish cavalier, the Governor of Venezuela. The long, low house is still a conspicuous landmark, but it is not so isolated, for the town is larger now and has grown towards it, and a church of modern construction rises upon the breast of the hill. But the same gloomy fortresses remain, and have been the

prison of many a patriot in the three hundred years of warfare Venezuela has suffered.

The town has not only been the subject of violent struggles between factions contending for the control of the government, but during the centuries it was under Spanish control was a favorite target for pirates, freebooters, and British fleets. It has been captured and looted again and again, and several times partially destroyed, for the fortresses that look so formidable, sitting upon the clefts in the mountain-side, are perfectly harmless unless an assailant will be so considerate as to remain within the narrow range of the guns. They can protect the shipping in the harbor, and a good portion of the town, but there is nothing to prevent a belligerent fleet landing its crew either to the east or to the west of them, and attacking their unprotected flanks. One can go ashore anywhere along the coast as easily as at the city of La Guayra, and General Guzman Blanco once disembarked an army in plain sight of his enemies who held the fortresses, but were unable to turn their guns in his direction.

The town owes its origin to a peculiar cause—a quarrel between one of the early Spanish governors and the inhabitants of a now defunct pueblo. Losada, who founded Caracas, in 1568 established a city on the coast considerably to the westward, which he called Caravalleda. At his suggestion the Spanish Cortes and the Council of the Indies granted it numerous privileges and exemptions not enjoyed by other towns. For several years it was therefore the most prosperous place in the whole colony; but in 1586 the governor, Don Luis de Rojas, a man of despotic disposition, established certain regulations which the citizens refused to tolerate. Rather than submit to his exactions they abandoned their homes in a body and moved to the present lo-

cation of La Guayra, leaving the tyrant with no subjects to rule.

There is a fine market-house, a number of good churches, an indifferent hotel, and several narrow streets upon which shops and warehouses open. But the most notable characteristic of La Guayra, and that by which it will be longest remembered, is the odors. There is no place upon the wide earth except China where one can find as great a variety, with the same pungency, and their vileness surpasses their numbers and force. The sweltering heat, which never varies in darkness or in daylight, but remains about 100° Fahrenheit from one year's end to the other, causes decay in everything animal and vegetable, and the odor never leaves the air. One would expect the city would cool off at sunset, or when a shower falls; but it is not so. I sat perspiring in the American consulate one morning listening to an animated argument on this subject between two old residents, one of whom held that it was always hotter when it rained, because of the steam created by the water falling upon the glowing earth and rocks, the other claiming that it was hotter after nightfall than during the sunny hours of the day, because the heat radiated from the rocky precipices of the mountain was more intense than the direct rays of the sun.

A former American consul has committed to verse his sensations upon leaving the city, and the lines, though of somewhat irregular metre, possess profound and truthful sentiment:

"Adios to thee, La Guayra, city of the dark-eyed gente,<sup>1</sup>  
And of tropic muchness and dolce far niente,  
Home of the wailing donkey, and the all-abounding flea,  
Mañana, gracias a Dios,<sup>2</sup> I bid adios to thee.

<sup>1</sup> Race.

<sup>2</sup> To-morrow, glory to God.



"Farewell, ye gloomy *casás*,<sup>1</sup> mejor dicho<sup>2</sup> prison cells,  
 Ye narrow, crooked *calles*,<sup>3</sup> reeking with atrocious smells,  
 Ye dirty coffee-shops, and filthy *pulperías*,<sup>4</sup>  
 Stinking stables, dingy patios, and fetid *carnerías*.<sup>5</sup>

"Where beggars ride on horseback like Spanish cavaliers,  
 And vagabonds perambulate like jolly gamboliers,  
 Where *lavenderas*<sup>6</sup> wash your *ropa*<sup>7</sup> when they are so inclined,  
 And hotel waiters strut around with shirt-tails out behind.

"Good-bye, ye Latin greasers; *Su atento servidor*,<sup>8</sup>  
 Que *via bien*, pues *adios*,<sup>9</sup> my boat is on the shore.  
 Oh, dirty people! dirty homes! oh despicable spot!  
 Departing I will bless you in your dirtiness and rot."

The population of La Guayra is composed exclusively of laboring people and men whose business requires them to reside there. Nobody of sound mind ever selected it as a place of residence, and every one gets away from it as soon as he can. But it is said to be a healthful place, the rate of mortality being comparatively low, and the inhabitants have their social enjoyments and amusements, like their neighbors in more comfortable locations. There is a theatre seating a thousand or more people, and a bull-ring, sitting on stilts on the mountain-side, in which the inhabitants up to a recent date had been accustomed to gather every Sunday afternoon and on religious feast-days to witness the delectable sport which has degraded the Spanish race. But bull-fighting of late has been prohibited by the government. A gleam of humanity has broken in upon the officials if not upon the people, and the animals are only teased, not tortured, now.

<sup>1</sup> Houses.

<sup>2</sup> No better than.

<sup>3</sup> Streets.

<sup>4</sup> Saloons.

<sup>5</sup> Butcher-shops.

<sup>6</sup> Washer-women.

<sup>7</sup> Clothing.

<sup>8</sup> "I am at your service"—a familiar expression.

<sup>9</sup> Good-bye.

There have been many improvements at La Guayra in recent years, and the greatest is the construction of a break-water, by means of which the mighty surf which continually beats against the base of the mountain is broken, and the passengers who arrive by steamer can now land with some sort of comfort. Formerly they were compelled to leave the steamer in lighters which were run through the surf by gangs of naked men howling like savages. The construction of piers has increased the business of the port, and when they are completed according to the plans vessels can moor at the docks.

At the foot of the pier is a park of mango and palm trees, sheltering a fountain, and the inevitable statue of Guzman Blanco. Behind it is a monstrous fortress-like structure, which has served for many years as a custom-house. The walls are five feet thick, bomb and earthquake proof, and have many a time resisted both these destructives. Like all business houses, as well as the residences of the place, it is built in the old Spanish style, surrounding a court-yard, which is reached through an arched gateway, the only entrance to the building. The rooms upon the ground-floor are used for storage, and all imported merchandise is brought there on tram-cars from the docks, to be opened and examined. A grand staircase leads to a wide balcony from which the upper rooms are reached, and they are used for the accommodation of the collector, his deputies, and clerks. The former usually resides in the building, and there is a handsomely furnished suite of rooms set apart for the accommodation of the president or any other high official who may be detained at La Guayra overnight.

This building has been the bone of contention between the rival parties in Venezuela ever since the separation of

the republic from Spain, for the revenues from customs at the port of La Guayra are the principal sustenance of the government, and the faction that collects them has the sinews of war. Everything is taxed, both exports and imports, and the tariff is for revenue only. Every passenger who lands or leaves has to pay tribute, not only upon the merchandise he brings with him, but in the form of head-money for a permit, without which he is not allowed to land or go aboard a steamer.

Travellers who conform to the regulations do not suffer inconvenience, but if they attempt to evade them they will regret it. Upon our steamer, when we were coming away, was a smart young Hebrew from Philadelphia, who thought he would save half a dollar. The anchor of the vessel had been raised to the deck, and she was turning for her northwardly course, when the custom-house boat was seen to leave the dock with a signal to wait for her. She came alongside, and in answer to the inquiry of the captain the officer in charge announced that a certain passenger whose name he gave had not obtained a permit. The agents of the steamship company are required to furnish the customs officers a list of persons to whom tickets have been sold, and upon comparing it with the list of permits issued it was discovered that he had taken none. The purser soon found him, and handed him down to the officer with his luggage. The young man did not look so cheerful as he did a few minutes before, when he was relating how he had evaded the duty, and went back to La Guayra, where, while waiting ten days for the next steamer, he had time to reflect upon the folly of trifling with the law.

This system of permits is not a bad thing, after all, for it is impossible for any one to leave the country without the knowledge of the authorities, and "no guilty man can

escape." There is very little crime in Venezuela, and the business of the courts is almost exclusively to try civil cases and cases of assault. Embezzlements and robbery are almost unknown, and locks are practically useless, for if a man should rob his neighbor's house he would be certain of detection, and it would be impossible for him to leave the country with his booty. In one of the large mercantile establishments which might be named it is the custom to keep several hundred thousand dollars in gold and silver currency, to pay for produce, stored in ordinary, old-fashioned safes that might be opened with an ordinary crow-bar. No watchman is employed, and the building is entirely unprotected; but although this amount of money has been kept habitually in the office, and people generally know it is there, no attempt at robbery has ever been made, and none is anticipated. Millions of dollars of coin are transported about the country annually upon the backs of donkeys and in ox-carts, with no guard but the ignorant peons who own and drive them, and at night their precious cargoes stand in the open air; but not a dollar has ever been stolen. The peons would not know what to do with the money if they did steal it, and there is no fear of their doing so.

Sometimes, when revolutions have been in progress, shipments of coin have been seized by insurgents, but when such danger exists no risk is taken. In the mining districts the bullion is sent to the seaports in a similar way, and thousands of dollars are moving constantly. There is but one instance within the recollection of the oldest inhabitant in which it has been disturbed. That happened some years ago, when an unusually large amount was in transit from the famous Callao mine in the Guiana country to the steamboat-landing on the Orinoco River. A Yankee

adventurer, with several rascals of his own stripe, concluded he would take the short road to wealth, and met the treasure train in a convenient locality. The peons in charge of it were unarmed and offered no resistance. In fact, they were paralyzed with amazement that any one should dare to interfere with them, so the thieves were permitted to have their own way. But they could not travel fast with their heavy plunder, and were easily overtaken by the police, who simplified and shortened matters by shooting them down in their tracks, and leaving their bodies upon the road-side for the vultures to fatten upon.

Nor is there any danger ever to the traveller on the highways as in the case of some of the Latin-American countries. It is not uncommon to meet a drunken and quarrelsome fellow on the road, and it is safer to keep out of his reach, but he will do no injury except when interfered with; and when drunk the Venezuelan peon is more apt to trouble strangers with demonstrations of affection than violence.

There is comparatively little drunkenness among the people. They have light native liquors made of fruits and the juice of the sugar-cane, which intoxicate easily, but when the fumes of the alcohol have left the brain there is no serious effect like that which follows brandies and other strong drinks. Among the upper classes there are wild fellows who drink too much, of course, but few countries are so free from intemperance as Venezuela.

Among other curiosities in La Guayra is a church that was built from the proceeds of the sale of lottery-tickets, and notwithstanding what we in the United States would consider a questionable source of revenue, the temple is the finest in the place, has the most prosperous parish, and has withstood the shocks of several earthquakes

that have done serious damage to other houses of worship.

There are numerous lotteries in Venezuela, and they are under the patronage, or at least the protection, of the government. The prizes are not large, and the prices of tickets are proportionately small. Drawings generally take place on days of religious festivals, from which the lotteries derive their names, and are said to be honestly conducted. These days are selected because all work is suspended, and the people are usually flush with money, having been paid off the evening before. The patrons are almost exclusively the common people, although now and then the ladies of the upper classes secretly invest in tickets through their servants. The latter stop on their way to market feast-day mornings to purchase tickets at the bazaars or from the women and boys who peddle them on the street.

Occasionally some lucky person draws a good prize which makes him independent for life, or enables him to engage in some lucrative business. A friend in Caracas one day took me into a *bodega*, or grocery, kept by a former servant in his family who got his capital as a prize in a lottery.

There is another church in La Guayra which is said to have been erected with the proceeds of fines imposed upon the people of the parish who profaned their conversation with the word "Caramba"—the common oath among all classes of people—or stronger equivalents. The church is therefore called "La Iglesia de la Santissima Caramba." This word is meaningless, but is constantly in the mouths of all people, without regard to sex or condition, and is not usually considered reprehensible. But now and then a pious priest will be found who prohibits its use among the sheep and lambs of his flock.

A story is told of three pious friars who were travelling along a hot and dusty road one day, driving a donkey which bore their luggage. The beast became obstinate, and finally lay down in the dirt, much to the damage of their property. One of them, more impulsive than the rest, forgot himself so far as to utter the first syllable of the forbidden expletive, and said "Car." The second exclaimed "ram," and the third "ba," which completed the unholy word, and they thus expressed their sentiments jointly without imperilling their souls.

## CHAPTER III

### A VENEZUELAN WATERING-PLACE

AROUND the corner from La Guayra, as one might say—that is, upon the other side of the cape that juts out sharply from the base of the great mountain into the ocean—is the little village of Macuto, the favorite watering-place and the only sea-side resort in Venezuela. There are some springs on the road from Puerto Cabello to Valencia that are much frequented by those afflicted with rheumatism and similar complaints, but the fashionable people never think of going there unless they are ill. Macuto is the Saratoga, the Newport, and the Coney Island of Venezuela combined. During the winter season it is very comfortable, and much resorted to by the people of the mountain towns. Although the town lies but six miles from La Guayra, and upon the same beach, the temperature is many degrees lower, and the difference may be said to measure the effect of the radiated heat of the western sun upon the bare rocks of the mountains.

Macuto is sheltered from this sun by the cape I have spoken of, and gets the northeasterly breezes, which are the most common in that latitude. When the thermometer reads a hundred in the shade at La Guayra, in Macuto it is not more than eighty or eighty-five. The nights are cool, the air is pure and sweet, and fresh odors are borne down from the foliage on the mountain-side, in the deep barrancas



or ravines. The two places are connected by a boulevard along the beach, neither so well made nor so well kept as the drive at Long Branch, but quite as beautiful, and much more picturesque, for on one side is the restless ocean, rolling up in great billows that break in foam upon the shore, and on the other the mighty mountain rising nearly 9000 feet abruptly and almost perpendicularly into the clouds.

This mountain, La Silla (the saddle), so called because of the shape of its summit, presents one of the sublimest spectacles that can be seen upon the earth's surface. It is the loftiest peak that arises anywhere directly from the sea. There are higher mountains in the Andean chain; Chimborazo is 21,000 feet, Aconcagua 23,000, and the Sierra Nevada de la Santa Marta, 300 miles to the westward of La Guayra, is 17,500 feet high; but they rise gradually from a group of foot-hills and beyond broad stretches of tableland, while La Silla springs directly from the ocean. The peak which approaches nearest it in grandeur is on the little island of Teneriffe, but that is nearly 1000 feet less in altitude. The reader can judge of the spectacle by imagining Pike's Peak situated at Long Branch, with only a few hundred feet of roadway between the billows and its base.

There is also a tramway between La Guayra and Macuto, over which trains of cars are drawn by a little "dummy" engine, and the trip can be made hourly in thirty minutes. When Guzman Blanco was president he did much to beautify Macuto, and built himself a handsome residence there. His example was followed by many of the wealthy citizens of Caracas, and there is a large mansion erected by General Crespo, but the accommodations for the public are still of a primitive character, and the natural advantages of the

place have by no means been utilized to their full extent.

The hotels, like the houses, are built in the Spanish style, and the purpose seems to have been to shut out as much air and light as possible, and to prevent the occupants from enjoying a view of either the mountains or the ocean. In fact, the main street, the boulevard along the beach, is given up entirely to low *bodegas*, or groceries, while the better class of hotels and the residences of the wealthy people are situated back on narrow streets, where the cool breezes would find difficulty in reaching them even if they were constructed in the proper way.

The outer walls are thick enough for a fortress, and generally windowless. The rooms open upon wide corridors, like the cloisters of a monastery, and these enclose a patio or court-yard paved with cement. The bedrooms are like prison cells, with no light or ventilation except such as can be filtered through the doors, which have panes of glass set in the upper panels. In the dry season the patio is used for a dining-room, and when it rains the tables are spread along the corridors. The parlor, or common sitting-room, is the only apartment with windows upon the street, and the natives usually avoid it for fear of draughts, which they believe are certain to bring fever to those exposed to them.

The first-class hotels are generally well kept, and furnish a good table, and there are several restaurants at which one can get breakfast or dinner if he only comes to spend the day; but the guests are expected to sleep upon canvas cots, which, according to the prevalent superstition of the country, are more healthful than mattresses and wire springs, besides affording less shelter for divers and sundry species of the insect family, which, I am compelled to say, show

more enterprise and industry than any other class of inhabitants. But no one visiting tropical countries can escape the assiduous attentions of these little pests. They are no more numerous than in Italy or Spain or Turkey, and the domesticated bugs of Venezuela are not nearly so multitudinous and annoying as those that infest the Havana hotels. Mosquitoes are rare, for there are no swamps or other malarial fountains in that part of the republic. Up the Orinoco River one finds them in plenty, and of prodigious size, but on the coast they seldom appear.

There are no comforts in the hotel bedrooms, and few conveniences; usually only a wash-stand, with pitcher and bowl, a monstrous wardrobe, a cot, and one or two ordinary chairs. The floor is covered with cocoa matting, or else is bare, for carpets attract and shelter fleas and other insects. The guests never use their rooms for any purpose except sleeping and dressing, and spend most of their time in the patio or the open air.

There is a large fortune awaiting the man who will go there and erect a modern hotel upon the sea-front, with plenty of windows and balconies and comfortable beds and chairs. The natives appreciate and enjoy comforts as much as anybody, and spend their money lavishly for the luxuries of life, but lack the experience and enterprise necessary to undertake such things. There are no architects in the country, and the native carpenters and masons know nothing of the science of modern building, but construct everything as their grandfathers and their great-grandfathers did in the time of Spanish domination. The government would gladly give the necessary land for a modern hotel, and would admit free all the materials, which is an important matter where building-lumber costs a hundred dollars a thousand feet. The timber of the country is all

hard and heavy. There is no pine or ash, but only mahogany, *lignum-vitæ*, and similar trees, with here and there a Spanish cedar or cyprus, which are scarce and expensive. Most of the native furniture is of cedar and mahogany. A modern hotel at Macuto of a hundred or a hundred and fifty rooms, two stories high, and furnished with light ash or oak bedroom sets, would be about as profitable an investment as could be made anywhere, and would be full of guests the whole year round. Not only the material, but the builders and servants must be imported, and it must be conducted upon the American plan.

The fashionable season at Macuto is from November to March, during the dry weather, but there is little difference in the temperature the whole year round, and the hotels are always open. I cannot imagine a more agreeable place for a winter's sojourn for people who want to escape the rigors of a Northern latitude. The climate is much more agreeable than that of Cuba or Mexico or Florida. It is more like that of Nice or Naples, and other towns along the Mediterranean, and the novelties of life in Spanish America cannot be realized or appreciated until one has tried them. There are large and comfortable steamers running to and from New York every ten days, the mails are regular, there is cable communication, and those who wish to visit the islands of the Caribbean Sea and the ports along the Spanish Main can go and come upon European vessels nearly every day. The expense and time required are much less than for a European tour, and those who are tired of Europe will find there new and novel scenes and experiences.

Bathing is excellent the entire year, and the surf is unsurpassed. At the eastern terminus of the boulevard that

connects Macuto with La Guayra, a miniature castle of stone has been erected for the accommodation of bathers, which is reached by a pier from the shore. You pay five cents for a ticket, which admits you to the bath-house, and gives you the use of the dressing-rooms and towels. A large area has been enclosed by piles, as a protection to reckless bathers, and the surf breaks over them. The enclosure is divided in halves by a stone wall, one side being used by the men, and the other by the women. Very few people of either sex use bathing-dresses, but go into the water *au naturel*. They throw a sheet around them as they leave the dressing-room, and hang that upon a line as they go down the stone steps into the water. Beyond the piles the sea is very deep. Two or three hundred feet from the shore the bottom drops a hundred fathoms, and a mile out it is said to be three or four thousand feet deep.

Sunday is the gala day at Macuto, as it is all over the Southern continent; not only for rest and recreation, but for pleasure. The bull-fights are on Sunday afternoon, and the best operas are given on the evening of that day, as well as the formal dinner-parties and balls. Sunday afternoons the ladies are expected to remain at home and keep open house to receive gentlemen callers, and from sunrise to midnight on the Sabbath all classes of people give themselves up to uninterrupted enjoyment. The stranger from countries where the Fourth Commandment is observed will be at first shocked at the license, but soon becomes used to it, and after a few weeks falls in with the customs of the country. No peon will work on the Sabbath unless he receives double wages, and if a person happens to be leaving by the train that day, he will do well to send his baggage to the station Saturday night, because it is almost impossible to hire a cart or a *cargadore* before Monday morning.

The women rise early on Sunday for six-o'clock mass, and if they are very pious they go again at ten o'clock; but men folks rarely exert themselves to attend church, and leave all religious duties to be performed by their wives, sisters, or daughters. One generally finds twenty or thirty women in a church for every man, but on the steps and walks outside there is usually a fair congregation of the male sex of all ages and degrees of respectability, who assemble to watch the fair señoritas as they enter and come away. There is a Faust for every Marguerita, and a Mephistopheles for every Martha.

As Macuto is really the only pleasure resort in the country, it is invariably crowded on the Sabbath-day with every sort and condition of people, who come from all the towns around for a day's outing. The wealthier classes take to the hotels or visit friends who happen to have houses, while the peons fill the bodegas along the sea-shore, where they drink *chica*, *pulque*, *arguadiante*, and other forms of fire-water, and have a good time, just as their brothers and sisters in Europe and North America under similar circumstances. They talk politics and gossip about their neighbors, the discussions sometimes ending in *embracios* and sometimes in blows; but they are not naturally quarrelsome, and do not require so many policemen to keep them in order as the same number of laboring people in the Northern zones.

So far as labor is concerned, Sunday is observed in Venezuela to a greater extent than in any other South American country I have ever visited. The market is always open until noon—and Sunday is the great day of the week for the hucksters—and the grocery establishments, the *panderias*, or bakeries, and the *lecherias*, or dairy stores, are usually open for a while in the morning to permit peo-

ple to purchase food ; but by eleven o'clock every door is shut and every blind closed, and you cannot induce a peon to do any kind of labor. I saw but one man at work in Caracas. He was trimming the grass in front of a church while the people were passing in to mass, and the tones of the priest were plainly audible as he chanted prayers. I asked the peon if he didn't know it was wicked to work on Sunday, especially in sight of a church when service was going on.

There was a comical twinkle in his eye as he looked up into my face, and said :

"*Su benedicion, señorito* (bless you, little master !), you don't suppose I am working because I want to ! The trouble is that last night the patron [a common term for employer] gave me money to buy sugar-cane for the mules, and I accidentally spent it for beer. The miserable animals have nothing to eat, and the patron said I must get them something or go to the *calabozo*. So I came here where I can cut the grass and say my prayers at the same time."

The life of the *hidalgo* and his *doña* at the fashionable hotel is about as monotonous as that of the visitors at Saratoga or Long Branch. The *desayuno*, or breakfast—which means coffee, rolls, and cheese—is served upon a long table in the patio, or in the corridor, from six to eight in the morning. The ladies creep out of their cells early, hastily dressed in plain black garments, and, after gulping down a few mouthfuls of coffee and nibbling a little bread, rush off to mass, while their lazy lords, clad in white duck, patent-leather shoes, and panama hats, creep out at their leisure, and sit for an hour around the table, sipping their coffee and eating their rolls and cheese with a deliberation that is evidence of a holiday. Then they lounge about the

patio and parlor, smoking cigarettes until the ladies return from mass with the latest gossip picked up from the neighbors they have met on the way. This enlivens the conversation, which grows brisk and interesting. The engagement of sweet Mercedes to one of the fast young men from Caracas is discussed with animation; and all of his previous love-affairs and adventures are recalled by one or another. The girls he has jilted receive their share of attention and commiseration, and some one suggests that if Mercedes expects to marry him the ceremony should be performed forthwith.

Then the men wander off into politics. The latest news is related, and the policy of the government is commented upon. So the conversation continues until the stone floor of the patio is covered with the stubs of cigarettes, and some one suggests that the hour for bathing has arrived.

The whole party, ladies and gentlemen, wander down the shady side of the street to the grand promenade, stopping now and then to exchange a few words with friends through the grated windows of their houses that are breast-high from the sidewalk. The women always kiss when they meet, and the men embrace each other; but only a Spanish-bred lady can kiss a friend gracefully through a grated window.

When the boulevard is reached the party sit for a few minutes upon one of the stone benches under the shadow of the drooping plumes of the palms while somebody rushes off to get bath tickets. Curiously enough, they are not sold at the bath-house, but at a drug-store three or four blocks away; but this is not so strange a custom as that which prohibits the sale of stamps at the post-office. If you want to post a letter in Caracas, for instance, you have to go to the Treasury Department to buy a stamp. The



postmaster has none for sale, and is not allowed to handle money. And if you want to buy a postal-order you have to deposit the money at the Treasury Department and get a receipt, in exchange for which the postmaster gives you a money-order of equal amount.

The bathing operation takes only three-quarters of an hour or less, for the ladies do not lie around in the sand in their bathing-suits, as is the custom at the North American resorts, and the party get back to the hotel to dress for the *almuerzo*, or breakfast, which is the solid meal of the day. It is served with wine, in courses, beginning with soup and ending with coffee, cheese, and *dulces*, a generic term which embraces all sorts of sweetmeats, confectionery, preserved fruits, ice-cream, cake, and the *et cæteras*. The South American people have an inordinate appetite for sweets, and the indulgence of it makes the women fat and keeps the dentists busy. After the soup come fish, roast-beef, chicken, beefsteak, different kinds of made dishes, vegetables, and salads, which are all served separately, like the *table-d'hôte* dinners of Europe.

After it is over everybody goes to his siesta, and sleeps an hour or more. From twelve to two or three o'clock in the afternoon the streets are as silent and deserted as during the same hours in the night; generally more so. Everybody is in slumber — master, mistress, guests, children, and servants—and remains so until two o'clock at least. If a person should make an appointment from eleven to two in the day, or call upon a native during those hours, he would be looked upon as a lunatic, and in all probability be turned away from his friend's door with an anathema ringing in his ears. It would be quite as proper to make a social call at three or four o'clock in the morning.

And this siesta is an excellent thing for the health, whether it is taken when a man is off for pleasure at the sea-shore or engaged in his accustomed avocation at home. In the tropical countries it is necessary and natural to divide the sleeping-hours. People get up early, and are at their offices, shops, and stores at seven o'clock in the morning. Even the government officials are at their desks at that hour, and a good half-day's work is done before eleven, when business is suspended—as much as the New York or Chicago man will do between nine and one o'clock. And the physiologists who declaim against sleeping upon a full stomach can find conclusive evidence of the fallacy of their theories. The Spanish-American eats the heartiest meal of the day, drinks a quart of wine, more or less, and a cup of black coffee, smokes a strong cigar or half a dozen cigarettes, and then lies down on his cot for a nap of an hour or two, day after day; and not only is he healthy and lives to a ripe old age, but never has the dyspepsia, or Bright's disease, or any other of the ailments that are born of indigestion. He does not bolt his food as we do, nor deluge his stomach with ice-water, but he fills it with all sorts of oily condiments, garlic, rich fruits, sweetmeats, and a quart of claret before he lies down in a dark and poorly ventilated room to sleep.

He awakens refreshed and rested, prepared for another four or five hours of labor, although he is never in a hurry, and does not work half as hard or accomplish half as much as we do in the temperate zones. He moves deliberately, takes little exercise, and a good deal of social formality enters into all his transactions. If you call upon a merchant or a lawyer on business you are expected to chat for fifteen or twenty minutes upon indifferent subjects before mentioning the object of your visit, and the meet-

ings of boards of directors are very much like social gatherings.

The afternoon at the sea-shore is spent like the morning. After the siesta the ladies sit around the patio in their wrappers gossiping, and the men wander off to the casino, where they play billiards or cards or talk politics around a wine-table, smoking cigarettes incessantly. At five o'clock, when the sun sinks down behind the mountain, they drive or promenade upon the *paseo*, or boulevard, until dinner, which is a duplicate of the noonday breakfast.

After dinner there is music in the parlor or at the casino, with dancing and drinking and cards, until midnight, when everybody selects a candle from the dozens that are set out upon the table in the dining-room, and goes to bed.

## CHAPTER IV

### A REMARKABLE RAILWAY

THE railway between La Guayra and Caracas is justly considered one of the most remarkable examples of engineering and construction in the entire world. The famous Oroya road of Peru, and the Arequipa line which runs from the Peruvian coast to the interior of Bolivia, both built by the late Henry Meigs, surpass it in some respects, and there are pieces of track in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado that were even more difficult and expensive; but the Caracas road is extraordinary, not only for the skill shown in its construction and the obstacles surmounted, but for the scenic panorama offered to the passengers.

Between the cities of La Guayra and Caracas the mountain La Silla is surrounded by lesser peaks on either side, broken by deep gorges and ravines. The lowest pass between the coast and the valley in which Caracas is situated is 5000 feet above tide-water and only five miles from the sea. Caracas lies at an altitude of 3900 feet, so that in making the journey one must ascend 5000 feet, and then descend 1100 feet on the southern slope of the range, which is a spur of the Andes. To reach this lowest pass the railroad climbs gradually up the sides of the neighboring mountains, and its total length is twenty-four miles.

The direct distance between the two cities through the centre of the mountain is only six miles or a little less, and

there is a mule-path over the side of La Silla only nine miles long. This path was the original, and for nearly two centuries the only, route of travel, and it was trod by the Indians ages before the discovery of America. At present it is not much used, except by artists and others attracted by the impressive scenery, and by civilized Indians who prefer to go over the mountain by a short-cut than pay fare on a railroad train. By starting early in the morning one can make the journey before noon, either on foot or on the back of a good mule; but it is much easier and in every way preferable to go from Caracas to La Guayra than in the reverse direction, for you have only about 3000 feet of ascent, and 7000 feet of descent.

The Messrs. Boulton, who own the New York steamers, have a colored boy whose only business is to carry their mails between La Guayra and Caracas on sailing days. If the steamer is to leave, as it usually does, at ten o'clock in the morning, the mails close at the Caracas post-office at noon on the previous day, and are carried down to the port by train; but the Boultons get another afternoon and night for letter-writing, for they despatch the boy at daylight on steamer day, and he always gets the mail-bag over that mountain-path before the dew is off the banana-leaves. And when the steamers arrive they get their letters twelve hours before any one else, for the boy is waiting on the dock, and starts up the mountain-side as soon as he receives them from the purser. He makes the trip in three hours, and when in a hurry has made it in two.

It was up that mountain-path that the vigorous old free-booter Sir Francis Drake climbed when he captured and sacked the city of Caracas in Queen Elizabeth's reign. Although not a Protestant of notable piety, he had a violent prejudice against the Pope of Rome, which was only

equalled by his hatred of the Spanish race, and whenever he saw a Spaniard or a Catholic he "went for him there and then." After the victory of the English fleet over the Spanish Armada in the English Channel, Captain Drake sailed down this way hunting for galleons that carried gold and silver between the South American colonies and the ports of Spain. He took great interest in visiting the cities along the coast, and on every one of them left his autograph, written with fire and powder and the sword.

Arriving at La Guayra, he destroyed the shipping that lay at anchor and then went ashore. When he had stripped the city of all that was valuable and destroyed what he did not want, he made an excursion to Caracas.

The people of the latter place had due notice of his arrival, for the inhabitants of La Guayra fled into the mountains. The governor called out every man capable of bearing arms, and fortified himself upon a cart-road which had been constructed between the two cities some years before. This was the ordinary route of travel three centuries before the railway was laid, and of course it was expected that Drake and his pirates would go up that way. But he knew better than to try it, for his scouts reported fortifications and an army of men behind them nearly the entire distance. He captured a miserable fellow by the name of Villapando, a veritable Judas, who for a gift of gold agreed to pilot the Englishmen up the old Indian path through the ravines. Thus, while the gallant alcalde and the men of Caracas were waiting breathlessly to annihilate Sir Francis, the latter crept up the mountain and was looting the city they had gone out to protect.

For three days Drake remained at the capital, plundering the houses, ravishing the women, and feasting his soldiers upon the wine and luxuries they found. There was but

one man left in the entire place, a nervy old knight named Alonzo de Ladoma. Although he was too old to go out with his neighbors to meet the Englishmen, he offered to fight them one at a time as long as his strength lasted. Sir Francis was much impressed with the old gentleman's valor, and would have spared his life, but the latter became involved in a controversy with a drunken pirate, who cut off his head.

When Sir Francis had gathered all the valuables in the city and loaded them upon the backs of his men, he hung Villapando in the principal plaza, marched down the ravine, and sailed away with more than \$1,000,000 in treasure. He did not lose a single man, and, although the city was practically destroyed, the only lives sacrificed were those of the brave old Ladoma and the traitor. The Spaniards who were encamped upon the wagon-road got news of the raid about the time Sir Francis was kissing their wives and daughters good-bye, and hurried back to Caracas, but were too late to do any good.

The engineers who laid out the railway followed the old wagon-route as nearly as possible, but much of the way had to carve and blast a roadway in the solid rock. The track is narrow gauge, and laid upon iron sleepers. There are many tunnels and miles of heavy embankment, but very few bridges, for the breast of the same mountain is followed. For more than half the distance—in fact, till the pass at the summit is reached—the ocean is in sight, and at times one can look down two or three thousand feet into the water below. The mountains are barren of vegetation, and, as the track is carved out of the solid rock, the road-bed is permanently secure. The grade is four per cent.—that is, it rises four feet in every one hundred, or one hundred and ninety-seven feet to the mile, which seems

pretty steep when one looks out from the rear windows of the car.

Although an accident would be attended with frightful loss of life, and a man of iron nerve will shudder when he thinks of it, there is really very little danger, for every possible precaution is exercised. Track-walkers are employed who go over every foot of the line several times a day, and inspect it carefully before the passage of all trains. At every curve there is a flagman, and the switches are inspected hourly. The cars are so arranged, too, that if any portion of the machinery or coupling should give way the brakes would be set automatically. The wheels are small, and there are sockets in the floor of the cars to fit them. By pulling a cord which would be violently severed if anything should break, the cars would be dropped upon the ground, and could go no farther.

But no accident has ever happened, and it is not likely that one ever will. There was once an attempt to wreck a train upon which Guzman Blanco, the Dictator, was travelling from Caracas to La Guayra with his family. Some wretches employed by his enemies removed a rail on one of the most dangerous curves, and if it had not been discovered by a track-walker the whole train might have been precipitated into one of the deepest gorges. Guzman was never able to discover the conspirators, but he arrested and locked up in the dungeons at La Guayra every man who could by any possibility have had a hand in the plot or knowledge of it, and used torture to force a confession from some of the suspected persons. The lesson of that discipline was sufficient to deter his enemies from making a second attempt.

The cost of the road was \$6,000,000, \$200,000 a mile—at least, that is the sum of money raised by the sale of



bonds in England for its construction. There is a prevailing impression that a considerable portion of this sum was not expended in a legitimate manner, but nobody knows the facts except the gentlemen most interested, and they have never been polite enough to gratify the curiosity of the gossips. There is considerable mystery about Guzman Blanco's connection with the corporation. At one time he was understood to have owned at least one-half of the bonds and a majority of the shares, and he destroyed the old wagon-road so as to compel people to travel and send their freight by rail. Many preferred to travel all day on muleback in the broiling sun, and gave their freight to the muleteers and the cartmen rather than send it by the cars. This made Guzman indignant. He uttered frequent and emphatic remonstrances, but they had no effect. Then he sent out a battalion of soldiers by whom the cart-road was destroyed, so that both the shippers and the travellers were compelled to use the railway. But there are still people of intelligence and wealth at Caracas who have never been over the road, and will not use it because they do not consider it safe!

Some years ago a concession was granted to an American company to pierce a tunnel through the mountain La Silla. Surveys have shown that a direct line drawn between the two cities is only six miles, and the tunnel will be only half that distance, the remainder of the road passing through ravines. The altitude of Caracas is a little less than 4000 feet, and as the road will be 32,000 feet long, the grade will be eight per cent. It is proposed to run the cars by means of the cable system and use water-power. There is a tremendous amount of water-power wasted in the mountains, and by damming one of the many

gorges a reservoir capable of storing millions upon millions of gallons can be erected.

Engineers familiar with cable roads have inspected the route, and pronounce the scheme entirely practicable. They differ somewhat in the estimates of the cost, the minimum being \$3,500,000, and the maximum being \$5,000,000, including the construction of the dam. But, taking the maximum figure, the cost will be \$1,000,000 under that of the existing surface railway, and the expense of maintaining and operating it by water-power will be much smaller. It is proposed to run trains every half-hour, for with water-power it will cost but little more to run twenty than two trains a day, as the other road does. This will enable those who have their business at La Guayra to live in the cool climate of Caracas, and passenger travel will be greatly increased.

The government is anxious to secure the investment of American capital in public enterprises, and not only offers concessions on liberal terms, but gives guarantees. The English and Germans have until recently monopolized Venezuelan concessions. Everything is a monopoly. If a man wants to build a saw-mill or a railroad, if he wants to open a mine or cut timber on public lands or do anything else in the line of new enterprises, he must first apply to the federal authorities, who investigate his credit and capacity, and then, if satisfied, grant him a concession for a term of years. Often in cases where the investment will promote the public welfare he is given a guarantee to protect him against loss.

The natives are notoriously lacking in energy and enterprise. There is none of the spirit of the pioneer in them. They will not risk money in a new venture until it is shown to be a success and pecuniarily profitable. Then

they buy the stock with ardor. They are engaged in mercantile business, in agriculture, in the professions, and in some of the trades, and show considerable business ability, but whatever is done in the development of the country must be done by the government or by foreigners. The natives are satisfied to run along in the same old rut their great-grandfathers made until some Yankee or German or Englishman introduces a modern improvement. As they are quick of perception they see its utility at once and adopt it eagerly. This is illustrated by the popularity of the telephone, which is found in almost every house and store, and is in even more general use at Caracas than in any city of similar size in the United States.

There are a number of street-car lines in the city, but the accommodations are so miserable that ladies never ride in the cars, and few gentlemen of the upper class do unless they are compelled to. The cars are small, grotesque affairs, without side walls or any shelter from the rain and sun except the roof, and are so infested with vermin that it is not agreeable to occupy them. There are no springs under the box, and the seats are narrow boards placed across horizontally. Good cars would be liberally patronized and increase the dividends of the company, but the directors appear to be satisfied with the support of the peons, and let the fastidious aristocracy ride in their own or hired carriages.

The street-car fare at present is five cents, and when you pay the conductor he hands you a ticket which you are expected to tear up. The company protects his integrity and its profits by making him purchase a lot of tickets in advance, one of which must be destroyed for every passenger he carries; and the number of tickets missing when he makes his report at night should repre-

sent the fares he has taken. The motive power is usually one large mule or two small donkeys, and they get over the ground with commendable energy. The driver carries a horn, which is blown as he approaches street corners.

In the olden times, when small change was scarce, the people used cocoa beans instead of pennies, and it is still the custom at the market-places in some of the smaller towns. The fruit of the chocolate plant always has a fixed value. It is worth thirty-five cents a pound on the plantation, and its price at the market is increased according to the distance it has been transported. The crop is so small and the demand so great that the beans are legal tender. But when it was necessary to make a large amount of change the old Spanish dollars were chopped in pieces, and the fragments can be found even now in the money-drawers of the merchants, or hanging to the watch-chains of people who regard them with curiosity.

The public make free with postage-stamps in the same way. If they want to send a one-cent letter and have nothing but a two-cent stamp, they take their scissors and cut it diagonally across, pasting one-half on the envelope and putting the other away for future use. The denomination of each stamp is shown by figures in each corner, and those that are so mutilated are received for half their value.

There are plenty of profitable concessions to be obtained in Venezuela, as the government is anxious to introduce foreign capital and energy and, especially, skilled labor. A first-class hotel is much needed at Caracas. The government and the citizens recognize the fact, and the travelling public demand some improvements upon the present accommodations. A liberal concession would be granted to the right man, and the site would doubtless be donated.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CAPITAL OF VENEZUELA

CARACAS, the capital of Venezuela, and its commercial metropolis, lies upon the southern slope of the mountain La Silla, and extends eastward and westward into the valley of the Rio Guaire. The latitude is  $10^{\circ} 30' 30''$  north, so that it is 630 miles from the equator, and the longitude about the same as that of Boston. The valley of the Guaire is supposed to have been the bed of a lake, which was drained into the sea by the action of an earthquake, and is one of the most beautiful as well as one of the most fertile in the world.

The valley is not more than three or four miles broad, and resembles that of the Aar of Switzerland, in which the city of Interlachen is located. The mountains on the northern side lift their heads nearly 9000 feet, and upon the southern side about 4000. To one standing in the centre of the city, or looking from a house-top, it seems to be entirely surrounded by peaks—to lie in a pocket, enclosed by an impenetrable wall. And from the pedestal of Guzman Blanco's statue, which formerly stood in the park El Calvario, beyond the fields of sugar-cane that stretch like sheets of livid green over the entire valley, broken only by the silver stream that waters them, and the pink and blue walls of the plantation buildings; beyond the pretty village of Antimino, where the rich have sum-

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mer residences, and the Dictator built a palace and a park fit for a king; beyond all this, and the groves of coffee-trees that decorate the foot-hills, can be discerned a narrow path between the peaks where the Rio Guaire comes tumbling down over the rocks to moisten the roots of the sugar-cane and hurry on to the sea.

Through this pass runs the road to Valencia, the second city of Venezuela, eighty leagues distant. Down this valley, along the bosom of the hills, is an aqueduct, which was built by Guzman Blanco in 1874, to bring the water of the mountains into Caracas, and the supply is stored in a vast reservoir on El Calvario, where his bronze effigy once stood as a guard upon it.

To the eastward, along the valley and lapping up the slopes of the mountains, are a long series of coffee plantations, stretching as far as the eye can reach, their dense, dark green furnishing an artistic contrast to the brilliant emerald of the sugar-fields. There is a railway in that direction, twenty-four miles long, to a town called Encantado, built by an English company, and intended to be a link in the proposed line along the northern coast. But it is extended slowly—only a few miles a year—and will require a century, at the present rate of progress, to reach its ultimate destination in the valley of Aragua.

The population of Caracas is estimated at 70,000 souls, and, including suburban towns, there are probably 80,000 people in the valley. The growth of the city has been very slow. At the time of the separation of Venezuela from Spain there are said to have been 50,000 people, but twenty-five years afterwards, in 1846, the census showed but 47,000. In 1883 another census was taken, which showed 56,194 in the city and 70,198 in the valley. The census of 1886 showed a slight reduction—55,819 in the

city, 70,078 in the valley; but it is not considered accurate, as the peons—the laboring class, who are timid and suspicious—used every possible subterfuge to escape the enumerators, for fear their names were being taken for the purpose of impressing them into the military service. This theory is corroborated by the large excess of females in the population reported. They numbered nearly 39,000, while the males were only 31,000. According to the census of 1886 there were 498 twins, 14 persons over one hundred years of age, and 6603 foreigners of all nationalities. Another fact that proves the inaccuracy of the census is that the vote in the valley is 15,608, a large number in proportion to the population.

There is a reason why the population has not increased, even in the ratio that ought to be maintained from natural causes. During the last seventy years the people have been engaged in almost continuous domestic warfare. From 1810 to 1871 there were two armies almost constantly in the field, contending, under the leadership of ambitious generals and statesmen, for the control of the government. From 1871 to 1885 the country was comparatively quiet, but since the later date its peace has been frequently disturbed by some disappointed politician, or some defeated aspirant for the presidency, who has caused a revolution.

This warfare resulted in an enormous mortality. Men were killed off faster than babies were born, and immigrants were prevented from entering the country because of the insecurity of life and property. The population of the republic is certainly less than it was fifty years ago, and, until permanent peace is assured, there is little inducement for immigration, and no prospect of an increase or a continuance of prosperity. One of the most potent influences in preserving the peace of the nation will be the

education of the masses. Shortly after his accession to power, in 1871, General Guzman Blanco expelled the monks and nuns from the country, confiscated the monasteries and convents, and transformed them into schools, which he filled with children under a compulsory education law. A certain portion of the public revenues—those derived from the sale of postage-stamps, and stamps which are required to be attached to legal documents—were dedicated to the cause of education, and honestly applied, so that the present generation have had the benefit of instruction in the rudimentary branches, and the privilege of attending without cost institutions for higher culture. Previously the people got their learning only from the priests, but now all children between the ages of eight and fourteen are obliged to attend the public, non-sectarian schools, and nearly everybody under the age of thirty can at least read and write.

The statistics show that in 1830 there were but 200 schools and colleges in the entire country, with but 7500 pupils. Then only the children of the rich had advantages for education. In 1870 there were but 300 schools and 10,000 scholars. In 1880 there were 1684 schools and 61,000 scholars, while in 1886 the number had been increased to 1957 schools and 99,466 scholars. Therefore, in fourteen years there was an increase of 1565 schools and 84,385 scholars, or an average of 452 scholars for every one thousand of the population.

In addition to the common schools there are two universities, six colleges, fourteen academies or preparatory schools, four normal schools for the education of teachers, nine seminaries for the higher education of women, one polytechnic school, one school of arts and trades, one naval and military academy, and one school of telegraphy,



all supported by the government, with twenty-four private colleges and academies. Connected with these institutions are 594 professors, with 4380 students under their care. The annual cost of education to the government is 4,078,-645 bolivars, or a little more than \$800,000.

The Central University at Caracas, which for many years was supported by the proceeds of a large coffee plantation confiscated from the monks, is one of the most extensive and thorough institutions of learning in all South America, with 30 professors and about 400 students. Attached to it are a classical college, and schools of law, medicine, theology, science, and engineering. The university building, which stands opposite the Capitol, in the heart of the city, is a beautiful structure of pure Gothic, and occupies almost an entire block.

Under the same roof is the national library of some 40,000 volumes, presided over by Dr. Adolf Ernst, an eminent scientist and scholar, of German nativity, who has a world-wide reputation, and is a member of all the leading societies in Europe and the United States. His name is well known at Harvard and Yale, and at the Smithsonian Institute at Washington, as at Caracas, and his original researches have added much of importance to the world's knowledge. Through all the numerous revolutions and political mutations in Venezuela, Dr. Ernst has kept his place at the head of the learned men of that country, independent of every party, and respected by all; and he may be called the polar-star of the intellectual firmament of the republic. He is the only man who is capable of preparing an accurate history of Venezuela—something that has never been written. There have been numerous books published in the Spanish language designed to commemorate the achievements of the leading men, and to pre-

serve a record of the stirring events that have occurred in rapid succession, but none has been impartial or even truthful. Political prejudice and preference have been so intense that the local writers have been unable to see justice in any cause but the one they advocate, and have made it their business to deify the leaders they have followed, and anathematize the rest of the generation.

Nor are the newspapers reliable. They only mislead those who attempt to study history from their columns. Formerly there was a censorship of the press; and no editor dared publish facts reflecting on the honesty or the fame of the leading men of the nation, or utter opinions that did not conform to the policy of the administration in power. As presidents and dictators have succeeded each other with marvellous rapidity, the established newspapers have been compelled to shift their political base accordingly, or suffer confiscation, so that one month they have condemned the man they were made to extol the next.

Since Dr. Ernst came to the country he has kept a daily diary of events, and in his manuscripts can be found the only accurate record of the last third of a century, which he intends sometime to prepare for publication. There is but one book published in the United States concerning the Republic of Venezuela, and that is *The Capitals of Spanish America* (Harper & Brothers, 1886), which treats of the city of Caracas in connection with the other principal cities of Central and South America, and there are only three other works on the same subject in the English language, all of them by Englishmen. One was written in 1868 by a Mr. Eastwick, who was sent out as an agent of the English Bondholders' Association to adjust the public debt, and, failing, took his revenge by ridiculing

the people and condemning the country in general terms. The author of another was a Mr. Spence, also an Englishman, who came over to secure a concession for digging phosphates on the islands along the coast, and he relates some interesting experiences of his own, but says little concerning the country. His book was written in 1871, and published in 1876. The third volume is a small one, prepared by a Mr. Barry, a mining engineer, who was sent out from London to look into some mineral properties, and gives a small amount of interesting information about the Guayana mines.

Caracas has suffered severely from earthquakes in past generations, but of late has been mercifully spared. In 1812 the city was entirely destroyed, and 12,000 people are said to have perished in the ruins. In 1826 there was another shaking up, but it was not nearly so severe, and the casualties were reckoned by the hundreds. There have been occasional disturbances since, but no serious damage has resulted. The people are quite sensitive on the subject, and insist that more property was destroyed by the great Chicago fire, and that more lives have been lost in cyclones in our Western States, than by all the earthquakes that ever visited Venezuela. There is really little danger to be apprehended from terrestrial convulsions. The houses are constructed of thick adobe walls, so as to be earthquake proof, and most of them are of only one story. It is a fact that vastly more property is annually destroyed and more lives lost from fires in the United States in proportion to the population.

There has been only one fire in Caracas since the oldest inhabitant can remember, and that destroyed a saw-mill belonging to an Irish-American. There is not a heating or a cooking stove in the entire city. You can look over

the roofs from the spire of the cathedral or from the hill Calvario in any direction without seeing so much as a wreath of smoke, or even a chimney. And there are no fire-engines, or street-hydrants, or coils of hose hanging out in a suggestive way in any of the hotels or public buildings. Nor are there any fire-insurance companies. They are not needed. The entire loss to the city from fire for the last half-century would not exceed \$20,000, and if a building should catch fire only the interior floors and partitions could be burned, as the walls of mud and cement will endure any amount of baking.

Caracas, like all other South American towns, is laid out in the most methodical manner in regular squares of equal area and frontage, divided by narrow streets paved with small cobble-stones. The streets accurately follow the cardinal points of the compass, and are numbered from the Plaza Bolivar—a beautiful park in the centre of the town—as the streets of Washington are lettered and numbered from the Capitol. The cathedral, which fronts on the plaza, is really the focus. The streets upon which it stands are called "Avenue East" and "Avenue West," "Avenue North" and "Avenue South." Then the numbering begins, and plaques of blue enamel are cemented upon the corner houses, which read "2 Sur"—which means Second Street East.

There is no variety and no display of taste in the architecture. Every house is exactly like the last and the next one, built in the same way, and of the same materials. It may be a trifle wider or higher, and the stucco that adorns the massive adobe walls may differ in details. One may be painted green, and the next pink, or blue, according to the taste of the owner; and the iron bars that protect the windows may be a little larger, or set at wider

intervals; but there is a monotonous sameness, even in the red-tiled roofs, and the iron water-spouts, that stretch out from the eave-troughs like the necks of hungry turtles, just far enough to permit the streams that fall from them to strike the middle of the sidewalk.

But these ugly houses always show their worst side—their blind side, as one might say—to the street; and no one can judge from their external appearance of the comforts and luxuries within. The city was built at the time when every man's house was his castle and must be secure. They make up, too, in length and breadth what they lack in height. Perhaps the ugliest house in all Caracas, as viewed externally, is the residence of the late Mr. Henry Boulton, a venerable and wealthy merchant. It looks as if its exterior walls might enclose a vast stable or a corral for cattle. In fact, the walls that surround his lumber-yard are more attractive and artistic; but when you have passed through the wide arched gateway, and reached the patio with its bronze fountain and tessellated corridors, its palms and roses, its orange-trees and oleanders, you realize that the habit of the Spanish-American millionaires is not to spend their money in beautifying their streets, but to use it entirely within their dwellings. The finishings and furnishings of the drawing-rooms, the parlors, the library, the dining-room, and the chambers are as sumptuous and expensive as can be found in the mansion of any merchant prince in New York or London, and the area covered by this one-story structure would give room enough for the erection of a dozen houses like those that line Fifth Avenue.

Let me give a picture of one house in Caracas, a type of the best, although it is occupied by only two bachelors, who prefer to live in spacious independence rather than in

the close quarters of a hotel. The exterior—the front elevation, as architects say—shows a dead adobe wall, about fifteen feet high, covered with a sloping roof of red tiles, and broken by a heavy, oaken door and two wide windows covered with iron bars like those that protect prisons. The big door, which is ten feet wide and reaches to the roof, is seldom open, but in it a smaller door is cut, just large enough to admit the body of a man. You touch the button of an electric bell, and a servant admits you, through the smaller door, into a wide, high passageway, as large as the vestibule of a church. Following this you come upon a scene of tropical loveliness, a patio or court-yard, with no roof but the starlit sky, in which are growing and blossoming in their natural luxuriance plants that surpass any to be found in the botanical gardens of the Northern latitudes. The atmosphere is laden with the odor of flowers, and trickling water from a handsome bronze fountain gives perpetual music. Around this court-yard, under a projecting roof, is a corridor fifteen feet wide, upon which the windows of all the apartments open. There are no sashes, and no glass in the windows, but privacy is secured by venetian blinds. The corridor is paved with blue and white marble tiles, upon which Persian rugs are spread to deaden the foot-falls. The front room, that which looks upon the street, is about thirty by twenty feet inside, and is used for a drawing-room. The floor is tiled and covered with a large rug. In the centre is a handsome table, covered with books and ornaments, and over it, from the ceiling, is suspended a massive argand lamp. In one corner is a grand-piano, scattered around are easy-chairs, Turkish divans, lounges, easels, and other articles of furniture and decoration, while upon the walls hang handsomely framed paintings and engravings.

The ceiling is peculiar, and seems to sag in the centre. Upon close inspection it will be discovered to be of heavy canvas, nailed to the cornice and covered with wall-paper. Between the canvas and the rafters that support the roof is an open space. This style of ceiling is common, and best adapted to the peculiar conditions of the country—much better than lath or plaster, which might be shaken down by an earthquake; and there is a worm which eats the wood-work, and will destroy the roof of a house in a year or two unless the rafters are frequently painted. So the canvas ceiling is arranged in such a manner that it can be easily taken down, and the wood-work it conceals covered with paint at frequent intervals, usually every spring and fall. In some of the best houses there is no ceiling at all, and the rafters and tiles that form the roof are exposed, but painted in ornamental colors.

In the corridor just outside the parlor is a large, round table covered with books and papers, with another large lamp hanging over it, and several easy-chairs that look as if they had just been occupied. Over in the corner is a sideboard loaded with half a dozen bottles, pipes, tobacco, and cigars. On either side are large rooms with windows looking into the patio. The first is a library, with shelves of books and a desk with writing materials upon it. The next three are bedrooms, with the floors covered first with cocoa matting and then with rugs. Across the way is a billiard-room and a gymnasium, fitted up with all sorts of appliances for muscular exercise, and its walls are decorated with guns, fishing-rods, fencing-swords, and masks.

Across the patio from the parlor is the dining-room, handsomely furnished, and beyond it another smaller courtyard, around which are the kitchen, the laundry, and the

apartments for the servants, with a bath-room that deserves attention. It is large, perhaps fifteen feet square, and the floor and walls are covered with blue and white tiles. The tub is not an elevated, coffin-shaped box of wood and zinc, or an urn of porcelain, like ours are, but a large pool, ten feet long and four feet wide, sunk in the floor to the depth of about four feet, with steps at either end by which the bather may enter the water, which, when the tub is full, reaches to his armpits, and gives him room enough for a plunge. The bottom and the sides of the tub are laid with the same sort of tiles that line the walls and furnish the floor of the room, and above it is an apparatus that will throw a shower-bath like a small deluge.

This is a sample of the best houses in Caracas, which are constructed upon a similar plan, and in such a way as to secure the greatest degree of coolness. The sun enters the house only at mid-day, and its heat is only felt in the patio where the fountain and flowers are. When it rains the water falls into the patio, and is carried off by drains at the base of the fountain.

There is no need of fires or other artificial heat at any season of the year, and the little fuel that enters the house is charcoal to be used in the kitchen, which is a curious place. That room is tiled also, the walls as well as the floor. There is no stove or range, but in one corner is an arrangement like a blacksmith's forge, with half a dozen holes for pots and kettles and gridirons, under which are kindled as many fires as the cook requires.

Such a house as this costs \$20,000 or \$25,000, and lasts forever. The one I have been describing was erected in 1822, and still remains in the family of the original owner. It is rented by its two bachelor occupants for \$150 a month, unfurnished, and the expense of housekeeping is



about the same as in the United States. More servants are required in Venezuela than in the latter country or in Europe, and they are not well trained ; but their wages are much less. A good man-servant, a cook, or butler, or valet can be obtained for seven or eight dollars a month, and women for about half as much. These bachelors have a butler, a man cook, a boy who attends to the parlor and chambers and runs on errands, and a laundress who comes in three or four days in the week as she is needed, but lives in her own house.

Most of the laundry work in the country is done by women on the banks of the streams. They carry the clothing in baskets on the tops of their heads, to and fro, wash it in the cold running water, pound it upon the rocks, to the destruction of buttons, and spread it out upon the grass to dry. Some times hot water and tubs are used when the washing is done in the houses, but there is not such a thing as a clothes-line or a washboard in all Venezuela. In the rear patios of most of the houses is a tank for water, made of stones and cement. In this the clothes are washed, and there is a pile of boulders as big as cannon-balls or pumpkins, upon which the garments are spread to dry. People from the United States have repeatedly attempted to introduce washing-machines, clothes-bars, and clothes-lines, but the native women cannot be induced to use them, preferring their own awkward way.

There is a prevailing prejudice among the laboring classes against innovations, particularly labor-saving machines and appliances. No native peon can be persuaded to use a wheelbarrow. He prefers to carry his load upon his head, and if it is too heavy for him, he seeks the assistance of a friend and loads it upon a sort of bier, with double handles and broad straps to go over the shoulders,

to be lifted and carried by a man at either end. Heavy furniture and trunks are carried miles in this way.

The native farmers plough with a crooked stick with one handle, just as the Egyptians did in the days of Moses, and nothing can induce them to adopt the modern two-handled steel affair. They simply cannot do it. General Guzman Blanco, who was always favorable to the introduction of labor-saving machinery and methods, at one time attempted to enforce the use of improved agricultural implements, but was compelled to give it up. The productiveness of the republic might be enormously increased, as Guzman realized, by enabling one man to do the work of two or six or ten, for the great drawback is the scarcity of labor; but the peons are stubborn—more stubborn than stupid—and will insist upon doing everything just as their fathers did, and their great-grandfathers, for that matter. It is the same spirit, the same resistance to innovations, that causes them to ship their coffee and sugar upon the backs of donkeys instead of by the railroad; that requires the payment for produce to be made in coin instead of checks; and causes that coin to be hidden away under old stumps or cracks in the roofs, instead of being deposited in banks to draw interest and increase the circulating medium.

The working-men and mechanics know nothing of labor-saving machinery. All the timber and wood-work for house-building is dressed by hand. There is not such a thing as a planing-mill or a sash-factory in the whole country, and all the furniture and cabinet-work is made in the same way. You will always find the locks placed upon the door-casings, and the socket for the bolt screwed upon the door, and the locks invariably upsidedown. When you call attention to it you are told that it is the custom of the country. When a house is being erected, whether it is one

story or two, the solid walls are first raised to their full height, and then holes are chiselled out to admit the ends of the rafters and timbers for the floors. It never occurs to the builder that an easier way would be to set the timbers in the walls as he lays the bricks.

When a new servant is engaged the employer must instruct her to the full extent of her duties on the first day. That is the sample of all days, and thereafter she will do exactly what she did then and no more. The morning after our arrival at the hotel in Caracas I called for a glass of milk while dressing. On every subsequent morning during our stay a glass of milk was brought me at precisely the same hour, without instructions, and although the servant was told several times that it was not wanted, she did not appear to understand, and continued to bring it just the same.

In the hotel were electric bells. The first day I rang for something, and a certain boy answered the summons. The next morning I rang again and again, and no one responded. Finally I went into the dining-room and found there half a dozen servants.

"Didn't you hear my bell ring?" I asked.

"Si, señor," was the reply.

"Then why didn't you answer it?"

"The boy that answers your excellency's bell has gone to market with the manager."

"But you knew he was not here, and you should have come in his place."

"No, señor; it is his occupation to answer your bell. I answer the bell of the gentleman in the next room."

And this provoking stubbornness lasted longer than my indignation. As long as I remained in that hotel my bell was only answered by the one particular boy. If he was

not in I could ring for an hour without receiving a response, although the house was full of other idle servants.

During the first week I was in the habit of having my coffee and rolls brought to my room, instead of taking them at the public table, and they were served at exactly eight o'clock by an Indian maid named Paula. One morning, when I was going on an excursion, I went out to the public table at six o'clock, and ordered my *desayuno*, as they call it. Although there were three or four waiters about serving other people at the same table, none of them could be induced to wait on me. Instead of doing so they went off to the other part of the house, wakened the girl Paula, and she finally took the coffee and rolls to my room, as she had been in the habit of doing. It was her business to bring my coffee, and no other servant would do so.

But as a general thing, aside from this stubborn adherence to habit, the servants are honest, docile, and obedient. Paula was especially deserving and attentive, and the stately air with which she carried herself was amusing.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE BIRTHPLACE OF SOUTH AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

THERE is an old building with thick adobe walls at Caracas which is as sacred in the eyes of South American patriots as Independence Hall in Philadelphia is to the people of the Northern Continent, and for similar reasons. One side faces the Plaza Bolivar, and from the windows can be seen the ancient cathedral, the equestrian statue of the Great Liberator, which is modelled after that of Andrew Jackson in front of the White House at Washington, and the Casa Amarilla, or "Yellow House," in which the president resides. Opposite the west wall of the old building, across a shaded street, is the Palacio Federal, or Capitol of the Republic, in which the Congress sits and official ceremonies are held. It is now the City Hall, the seat of the municipal government, but it used to be the residence of the governor when the country was a colony of Spain.

In this building, in the large council-chamber at the corner, on the 5th of July, 1811, a "junta" or convention of leading citizens assembled, and formally proclaimed their independence. It was the beginning of the great revolution in which all the Spanish-American colonies threw off the yoke of Spain—the first step towards freedom on the Southern Continent. There had been considerable disturbance previously, just as the people of Boston threw the tea overboard, and the Spanish governor had been driven away

after being forced to abdicate in April of the year before; but this was the first time that citizens of Spanish America assembled publicly and in a solemn, formal manner declared that they would no longer submit to the exactions or obey the edicts of the king.

The original document, in the handwriting of Francisco Miranda, hangs upon the wall to-day, bearing his own signature and those of sixty or more of his fellow-patriots, representing the best families of Venezuela. It is faded and frayed, and some of the lines are almost illegible, but it is the most precious historical relic in the country, and is preserved with religious care. At the end of the room hangs a large painting, perhaps the finest work of art in Caracas, representing the scene with approximate accuracy, although some of the many figures were painted from memory. It resembles, in the grouping of the characters and in the general treatment of the subject, a similar picture that hangs in the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington—the signing of our own Declaration of Independence. The foremost figure, and the most conspicuous, is that of a slender man, with striking features, and soft white hair worn in a queue. He is Francisco Miranda, the first leader in the revolution for independence in South America, a native of Caracas, and the most romantic character in the history of Venezuela. Dr. Ernst, the German scholar and scientist, who knows the country and its records better than any one else, and can judge from an impartial standpoint, being a foreigner, regards Miranda as the ablest and most brilliant figure in South American history, and the ablest man Venezuela has produced, although he was not so successful a soldier as Simon Bolivar.

Miranda was born in 1754. His parents belonged to one of the oldest and wealthiest families of the colony, and ac-

according to the custom of their class the son was sent to Spain to receive his education. He was given the commission of a lieutenant in the Spanish army, and served for a time in Guatemala. He was very young, but even at that age his patriotism revolted at the treatment of the colonies by the court at Madrid, and he declined to participate in such outrages. Therefore, he resigned his commission and went to France, where the Marquis de Lafayette was preparing to leave for North America to aid Washington and the Continental Army. The young marquis had been once to America, had served two years as a soldier, and at this time, 1778, had returned to Paris to secure funds and reinforcements for Washington. Miranda, who was about the same age, twenty-five years, and moved in the same social plane as Lafayette, was familiar with the latter's career in the colonies, and from his friends, as well as from Franklin, Dean, and Arthur Lee, the revolutionary commissioners at Paris, had become inspired with sympathy for the struggling colonies and a desire to assist them. Thus, when Lafayette called for assistance he was the first to volunteer. In January, 1779, he sailed from Havre to Boston, and served under Washington until the end of the war, most of the time on the staff with the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

It was during this service that an ambition was conceived in him to be the Washington of Venezuela, the liberator of his native land, and as soon as the war in the Northern Continent was over he sailed for South America, and raised the standard of liberty in 1783.

Venezuela had suffered more from the oppression of the Spanish kings than any other of the colonies, chiefly because she produced little or nothing of value. From the other provinces the crown got gold and silver, which were the only products regarded as worth exportation; but she

yielded neither, and therefore, not being thought worthy of attention, was left to the mercy of brutal and despotic governors sent over from Madrid.

In 1749 an insurrection was raised by Juan Francisco de Leon, one of the most intelligent and wealthy of the planters of the country, but he was easily overcome, and, although he managed to escape capture, his family were made prisoners and sent to Spain, his buildings were razed to the ground, and his hacienda, the finest and most productive in all Venezuela, was sown with salt by order of the governor.

In 1781 there was a similar uprising, simultaneous with that in Ecuador and Peru, where the natives attempted to overthrow their Spanish oppressors, and restore Tupac-Amaru, the descendant of the ancient Incas, to the throne of his ancestors. But it was a failure, and the unfortunate Amaru was sentenced to a punishment that makes one shudder. First his tongue was cut out, and his ears were amputated; then he was led to the centre of the plaza at Cuzco where his wife and children were all butchered in the most horrible manner before his eyes. Ropes were then tied around his ankles and his wrists and attached to four horses, which were started slowly in opposite directions, so that his body was gradually torn apart. The fragments were then gathered up and hung in the plaza as a warning to traitors to the Spanish crown.

Two years later Francisco Miranda, with the fate of Amaru still fresh in the public mind, attempted to revive the revolution, and it is not strange that he did not succeed. But he escaped arrest and fled to Europe. He visited France, Germany, Italy, and Russia, spending two or three years at St. Petersburg, where he was distinguished by the favor of Catherine the Great, and became one of the ac-



cepted lovers of that remarkable woman, the Cleopatra of modern times. He was a man of brilliant intellect, graceful presence, and fascinating manners, wrote poetry, was gifted in music, and had other accomplishments which in those days made him a popular and useful attaché of any court. But his motive in all his travels seems to have been patriotic, to excite the sympathy and obtain the assistance of the European powers to secure the independence of his country, and the furtherance of his own ambition. Behind the gay manners of a courtier he endeavored to conceal the craft of a diplomatist, and while entertaining the monarchs and millionaires with his accomplishments, he was striving to secure financial and military aid to promote his darling project.

After Miranda's death his papers were sold to the British government by his son Leandro for a considerable sum of money in hand and a life pension of two hundred pounds, and they are supposed to be still in the archives of the Foreign Office in London. Dr. Jose Maria Rojas, formerly of Caracas, but now residing in Paris, where he some years ago purchased the title of marquis, was once allowed to examine these documents, and obtained possession of many others, including a thousand or more letters written by Miranda to friends in Venezuela during his residence in Europe. With this material the marquis prepared a biography of Miranda, which has been printed in French and Spanish, and is a most entertaining work. The Rojas collection has since been purchased by the Venezuelan government, and will no doubt be published, as the Bolivar papers have been.

Among these papers are some very curious and interesting evidences of Miranda's amours with the Empress of Russia, particularly his letters to friends at home, in which

his adventures and daily life in the palace at Tsarskoe Selo and at the Hermitage in St. Petersburg are described at great length and detail. Their publication, if they are allowed to appear intact, will create a decided sensation. Among the papers in the British archives are a number of orders for money to be paid Miranda, signed by Catherine and addressed to her chamberlain, which he appears never to have used.

In the public library at Caracas Miranda's books are preserved, and his literary taste and culture are shown by many manuscript notes and annotations which appear in his handwriting. They have also his sash, a fine piece of silk net, and a beautiful travelling-desk of inlaid pearls, which are said to have been presented to him by his imperial mistress. Miranda left few descendants, and such as survive now live at Lima, Peru, where a grandson, a gentleman of considerable ability and notable wit, has made a reputation in literature and politics. A grandniece was murdered at Florence, Italy, in 1889, by a discarded lover.

With all his diplomacy and wit and personal charms, Miranda failed to interest Catherine in the welfare of his country, although she had shown marked sympathy with the North American colonies in their struggle for independence, and for this reason had been sought by him. Either losing his patience or her favor, he left Russia and returned to France, where he participated actively in the French Revolution and became a general of division. He was held responsible for the loss of the battle of Neerwinden, tried before a revolutionary tribunal for complicity in the treason of Dumouriez, and acquitted, although he was deprived of his command and compelled to leave the country. After spending some years in England he returned to Venezuela, but received no encouragement in his revolutionary projects,

and in 1803 sailed for France. Napoleon, then First Consul, expelled him from the country, and he sought refuge in the United States, where he was not cordially received because of his reputation as an adventurer. But he succeeded in exciting considerable sympathy, and acquired some funds, with which he organized a filibustering expedition and sailed for Venezuela, intending to drive out the Spanish authorities and establish a republic with himself as its head. He dreamed of a career like Washington's, but his enemies assert that Napoleon Bonaparte was his ideal, and that his ambition was not entirely unselfish.

The Spanish authorities were, however, advised of his movements, and on the 25th of March, 1806, when he arrived off the town of Ocumare, half-way between the ports of La Guayra and Puerto Cabello, he was attacked by a man-of-war, lost two of his three vessels and most of his troops and supplies, and narrowly escaped capture himself. The Governor of Caracas, Don Manuel de Guevara, offered a reward for his arrest alive and \$20,000 for his assassination; but he succeeded in reaching the English island of Trinidad, where he placed himself under the protection of Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane, commander of the British fleet. Six of the prisoners taken at Ocumare, citizens of the United States, were beheaded, ten were hung, and the remainder were imprisoned in the dungeons at Puerto Cabello, Cartagena, and San Juan del Puerto Rico, from which they never escaped.

The English at this time were at war with Spain, and Admiral Cochrane assisted Miranda in fitting out another expedition, with which he landed at Coro, on the Venezuelan coast, at the head of six hundred men, mostly Englishmen. After capturing the city Miranda raised his standard and declared a republic; but he met with no sym-

pathy or co-operation from the people, was compelled to retire, and sailed for Jamaica, where he appealed to the English governor for military assistance. The latter failing to respond, Miranda discharged his troops, and sailed for London to lay his case before the king and his cabinet; but they had matters of more moment to absorb their attention.

Napoleon I. had placed his foot upon the rest of Europe and was grasping at the crown of Spain. England, selecting the weaker of her two enemies, attempted to save the sceptre of Charles IV., and sent gold and troops into the Peninsula. Miranda, disheartened and bewildered, penniless and friendless, led a lonesome life in the coffee-houses and low resorts of London. The famous courtier was glad of any breakfast he could get. In the meantime Simon Bolivar, a young man of twenty-four years, whose family had been intimate with that of Miranda in Caracas, although he was little more than half the latter's age, having completed his education, was travelling through Europe. He met the distressed patriot in London, and, sympathizing with his opinions and plans, furnished him funds from his own well-filled purse, and the two together attempted to excite an interest in the affairs of their country among British statesmen and soldiers.

In the meantime the cause of liberty had been gaining ground in Venezuela, and nearly all the citizens of prominence belonged to republican clubs. When Napoleon made his brother Joseph king of Spain they refused their allegiance; and, although they had suffered terribly under the despotism of Ferdinand V., declared in favor of his dynasty. On April 19, 1810, the French governor of the colony was compelled to abdicate. It was a national feast-day, and all the citizens were in the streets. As the gov-

enor returned to his palace, to the old structure I have described, he was met at the entrance by a mob that filled the house, conducted to the council-chamber, and there given his choice between abdication and death. He signed the renunciation of power that had been prepared for him, and sought refuge on a French man-of-war then lying in the harbor at La Guayra. A "junta" or committee of citizens, was selected to administer the government, and continued to exercise authority until Bolivar arrived from England with Miranda, when the latter was proclaimed commander-in-chief of the armies of Venezuela and provisional president of the republic. In a few short months he had emerged from the most distressing situation of his life to enjoy the summit of his ambition, as it is always darkest just before dawn. But a little more than a year later Miranda was a prisoner in the hands of the Spaniards, betrayed by those who had been his warmest friends.

The King of Spain sent over an army and a fleet, under the command of General Monteverdo, to bring the rebels to terms. Miranda was at the head of the revolutionary army, and Bolivar, then only twenty-six years old, ranking as a colonel, was in command of the most important fortress in the country, in the harbor of Puerto Cabello, with a slender garrison and 1200 prisoners, including most of the former officials of the colonial government, and the officers of the colonial troops. Unfortunately for him and for his country, a mutiny occurred, the prisoners were released, and the fortress, with nearly all the munitions of war upon which the patriots were depending, fell into the hands of the Spaniards. Bolivar escaped, however, and fled to the estates of his family at San Mateo.

The Spaniards, thus reinforced, and amply supplied with arms and ammunition, met Miranda in the battle on the

plain beyond Victoria, and compelled him to sign a treaty of capitulation in which the sovereignty of Spain was recognized.

Then came the terrible earthquake which destroyed the city of Caracas and 12,000 lives. A whole regiment of the patriot army was buried beneath the ruins of their barracks, and many of the men who had been foremost in the republican movement were also killed. The priests, who from the beginning had opposed the revolution and adhered to the Spanish government, pronounced the calamity a visitation of God, and the doom of the city the just judgment of Heaven upon the unpardonable crime of rebellion against the king, the Lord's anointed.

These two great disasters demoralized the patriots, and a bitter controversy arose between Bolivar and Miranda. The latter held his young aid responsible not only for the loss of the fortress at Puerto Cabello, but also for the defeat at Victoria, as a natural consequence, while Bolivar accused his commander of treason to the republic in signing articles of surrender which recognized the sovereignty of the Spanish king. The feud ended by Bolivar's denouncing Miranda to the Spanish commander. On the 31st of July, 1812, Miranda was arrested at La Guayra, placed in irons, and taken to Spain, where he was imprisoned in a dungeon on the island of Ceuta, at the tip end of Africa, opposite Gibraltar. There he died a few years after, and the body of a courtier who had been caressed by an empress was cast into the sea.

A noble monument in bronze has been erected to the memory of Miranda in the plaza before the Pantheon in Caracas, and the inscription reads:

#### MIRANDA.

Born in Caracas, June 9, 1756.

Died in the Arsenal of Ceuta, July 14, 1816.

On the opposite side of the pedestal, in letters of similar size, is this inscription :

In honor to his memory,  
The Illustrious American,  
GENERAL GUZMAN BLANCO,  
President of the United States  
of Venezuela, erected this  
monument in 1883.

Suspended upon the wall beside the declaration of Venezuelan independence in the old council-chamber is another relic, quite as precious, and even more interesting to the student of American history, because of its age and associations. When Francisco Pizarro started from Cadiz for the conquest of Peru, he was presented with a silken banner, which bore the escutcheon of the dynasty of Aragon and Castile, embroidered by the fair hands of the queen. Above the armored hosts of Pizarro, in the cruel butchery of the innocent and harmless incas, whose only crime was a feeble defence of their lives and hearthstones, this banner was borne, and, with the cross of Christ which they carried in the other hand, it represented the system of civilization which the Spaniards brought from the Old World to the New. Under its dainty folds more crime was committed and more innocent blood shed than an eternity of perdition can adequately punish, and, although the work and the gift of a pure woman, it was the emblem of murder, robbery, rapine, and devastation, carried to a degree that the world has never seen elsewhere.

When Bolivar liberated Peru from the yoke of the Spaniards, this banner hung in the Cathedral of Lima, over the rusty bones of Pizarro, and its captors divided it into two parts. One half was given to the Liberator, who brought it to Caracas, and the other to General Sucre, one

of the noblest heroes of the revolution, who presented it to the National Museum at his native city of Bogota, where it still remains.

There are other interesting mementos here also—a rude painting of the humble house in which Bolivar died, and an original portrait of him, made in Paris, when he was very young. There is also the ever-present full-length picture of Guzman Blanco in a resplendent uniform, and several handsomely engrossed and illuminated memorials which had been from time to time presented to him by the citizens of Venezuela, in which his glories and virtues are set forth in high-sounding verbs and lurid adjectives.

On the large table in the centre of the room is the official marriage-register of the city, for there all the civil ceremonies are performed. For several years the civil rite of matrimony has alone been recognized as legal by the government of Venezuela, although most of the people go afterwards to the church and have their marriage sanctified by the priest. The governor of the district, the judges of the courts, the justices of the peace, and some other magistrates are authorized to perform the ceremony, but all the weddings must take place in this room, and the contract must be signed there in the presence of the parents of the couple or other competent witnesses. Before the ceremony is performed a license must be obtained from the register of the city, who occupies an adjoining room, and a notice to that effect must be posted for ten days in a public place. Just outside the entrance to the building, therefore, is a bulletin-board, upon which the matrimonial intentions of the people of Caracas are made known, and those who pass along the street invariably stop to inspect it, in order to see who of their friends are expecting to be "hitched."



When the ten days are past, the bridal party comes here clad in bright array, accompanied by their friends, take the vows, and sign the contract. Then they go to the church. The favorite time for weddings is at nine o'clock in the morning, or in the early evening about dusk, and there is usually a crowd of curious people about the door waiting to see the ceremony, which does not differ materially from that in vogue in the United States, and is like that used by the civil magistrates of France. The governor or the judge, or whoever happens to be on hand to do the business, first reads the law to the candidates for matrimony. Then he reads the license which has been previously issued. This sets forth the age, nativity, and occupation of the parties, with some other statistical information, and declares that there is no legal impediment in the way of the union. To the facts stated both the bride and the groom have to make oath, as well as their parents if they happen to have any, and the witnesses selected by them. After this formula has been finished, the judge takes the bride aside, and asks if she is acting of her own free-will and accord, or if compulsion has been exercised to influence her. If she says "no" to the latter question, he asks the same question of the groom, thus giving him a chance to back out if he desires. Then the couple are commanded to stand up and clasp their right hands. Jose Francisco is made to repeat after the judge a formula in which he declares that he takes Maria Concepcion to be his beloved wife, to have and to hold, etc., and Maria Concepcion in a similar manner accepts Jose Francisco as her beloved husband to an equal extent and under the same conditions, until death do them part. Then blank contracts are brought out, which have been prepared in advance for their signatures, one for the bride and one

for the groom, while a third copy is made in a book which is kept for the purpose, and is accessible to any citizen. Finally, when all these proceedings have been satisfactorily performed, the couple stand up and take hold of hands again, and the judge, "in the presence of God and all these witnesses, and in the name of the Republic of Venezuela," pronounces them man and wife.

Sometimes the judge kisses the bride, and sometimes he doesn't. It depends upon circumstances. If he knows her well and she is pretty, he gives her a "salute," as they call it; and there is usually a good deal of "saluting" and sobbing and wiping of misty eyes among the women, while the men embrace and say "*Amigo ! amigo !*" to each other, which means "friend."

## CHAPTER VII

### SIMON BOLIVAR, THE WASHINGTON OF SOUTH AMERICA

It was Tom Ochiltree, the witty Texan, I think, who once said to his friends that he preferred more "taffy" while he lived and less "epitaphy" when he died. If the long list of Venezuelan leaders could have heard this remark they would have applauded it vociferously, for few of them have been permitted to live or die in peace or among their people. While the capital of their country is decorated with their monuments, the public buildings embellished with their portraits, and the National Museum filled with their relics and mementos of their careers, most of them have died in exile or in prison cells.

Miranda's last days were passed in the prison on the island of Ceuta, Spain; Bolivar's in a lonely cabin at Santa Marta, Colombia; Paez's in banishment in New York; Monagas's in a dungeon at Maracaibo; Falcon's at Martinique; and others that might be mentioned have died without mourners and have been buried by the hands of aliens, yet posterity has embalmed their memories and does honor to their dust.

Of all the men who have been conspicuous in Venezuelan history, Simon Bolivar stands first in the reverence of the world, and justly so; for he was not only the liberator of his native land, but of the four neighboring republics—Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, which was christened

in his honor. They have raised statues to him in all the principal cities; they have called states, cities, and provinces by his name; and the standard coin of Venezuela, equal in value to the French franc, is called a Bolivar (pronounced Bo-lee-ver). The public veneration for his memory is even greater than that for Washington and Lincoln in the United States, and the common people regard him as the peasants of Russia regard Peter the Great.

In the museum at Caracas is a room set apart, like the Holiest of Holies, for the preservation and the exhibition of his relics, collected at great expense in all parts of the world. His correspondence has been gathered, the originals when possible, and many copies, from Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, the United States, and the countries of Europe, and published at government expense in a series of volumes, like the *Records of the War of the Rebellion in the United States*. Every scrap of paper bearing his autograph, all the orders he issued when in command of the armies of the struggling young republics, every letter he wrote in his romantic and stormy life, has been religiously preserved for the inspection of the people, and to inspire them with the patriotic sentiments he cherished. The clothing he wore, the dishes and plate he used, his camp-chest and writing-chest and writing-desk, his swords and revolvers, his sash and boots, his books and papers, even his coffin and the pall that covered his remains when they were last laid to rest are also preserved. He was originally buried at Santa Marta, where he died. Twelve years later the body was brought to Caracas with great ceremony, and deposited in a chapel of the cathedral, but his heart was removed and retained in an urn in the old church at Santa Marta where masses were first sung for his soul.

Then, when Guzman Blanco erected a Pantheon for the

burial of the distinguished dead, and sent agents of the government to bring home the bones of patriots who had died in exile, the remains of Bolivar were for a second time removed, and placed in a magnificent and impressive marble sepulchre. Upon it is a statue of the hero represented as standing in a listening attitude, with a military cloak hanging from his shoulders, and his hand upon the hilt of his sword. On one side is a statue of Plenty scattering coins from a tray; on the other, one of Justice; while in bass-relief is a procession of female figures representing the arts and sciences. The inscription upon the monument is :

## SIMON BOLIVAR.

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Cineres hic condit honorat  
grata et memor patria.  
1852.

There is another, an equestrian statue to Bolivar in the principal plaza of the city, which is surrounded by the president's residence, the cathedral, the municipal buildings, the foreign relations office, and the post-office department. This is a splendid figure mounted upon a rearing horse like that of Andrew Jackson in Lafayette Square at Washington. And nearly every town of size in the country has done similar honor to the Liberator. In that branch of the museum which is devoted to his relics are two models for monuments which were submitted several years ago, when the government of Colombia intended to erect one by the side of that of Columbus upon the Isthmus of Panama. There are also numerous portraits scattered through the public buildings, some of them painted from life, and others *post mortem*. His bust in marble, bronze, and plaster is seen upon every hand, and prints of

his face are hung in almost every shop and residence. Thus, as his face appears also upon all the paper money of the country, and upon all the coins, it is very familiar.

One of the most highly valued pieces in the Bolivar collection is a miniature of Washington, an original, painted on ivory by some artist whose name I do not recall, enclosed in an antique velvet case. It was presented to Bolivar in 1828 by George Washington Parke Custis, of Mount Vernon, and bears this inscription :

This picture of the Liberator of North America is sent by his adopted son to him who acquired equal glory in South America.

Bolivar's birthplace is marked by a tablet of marble, inscribed :

Here was born  
SIMON BOLIVAR  
July 24, 1783.

The house is very near the centre of the city of Caracas, across a narrow plaza from the market, and adjoins the little Protestant chapel. In its day it was one of the finest residences in the capital, but it now stands in the business section, and, like the old Palace of the Inquisition at Carthagena, is a tobacco factory.

In the collection at the museum are Bolivar's diplomas, his commission in the colonial army, and the certificate of his enrolment in school. In the parochial records of the cathedral appears this quaint record of his baptism, after the fashion of those days :

"In the city of Mariana de Caracas, on 30th of July, 1783, Don Juan Felix Jeres y Aristeguieta, an elder, with the permission given him by one, the undersigned, Cu-

rate of this holy cathedral, baptized, anointed, and blessed Simon Jose Antonio de la Santissima Trinidad, a child born on the 24th inst., legitimate son of Don Juan Vicente Bolivar and Doña Maria Concepcion Palacio y Sojo, natives and citizens of this city. His godfather was Don Feliciano Palacio y Sojo, to whom the spiritual relationship and obligations were made known. And to certify this act I affix my signature. Date up supra.

“BACHILLER MANUEL ANTONIO FAJARDO.”

Bolivar's family were rich. They were among the hidalgos, the grandees of the colony, and came from the aristocracy of Spain. They owned a pretentious residence in Caracas and large estates in different parts of the country. One of their plantations was just outside the limits of the city, an easy ride on horseback. Another that they owned, and the most extensive, is near Victoria, about half-way between Caracas and Valencia, and a third, San Mateo, is near the latter city. Bolivar was received into the Church when he was seven years old, and the record of his confirmation is still shown. He was educated in the rudimentary branches by Don Simon Rodriguez, a famous scholar of the time, and a man of most eccentric habits—a sort of local Diogenes. Afterwards he had several other tutors, among them a Capuchin monk named Padre Andujar, who had great influence in the formation of his character. His father died when he was three years old, and his mother when he was fifteen. Don Cator Palacio, his maternal uncle, became his guardian, and the trustee of a large property, which was divided between him and his two brothers. When he was sixteen he was mustered in as a lieutenant of the militia, and assigned to a regiment of which his father had for many years been the commander.

When he was eighteen years old, in company with a tutor, he made a voyage to Cuba and Mexico. At the latter place he lived in the house of the Marquesa de Inuapa, which is still standing and contains a portrait of the young traveller painted at this time and presented to his hostess as a memento. It was on this voyage that the career of the Liberator came very near being cut off as it was commencing. The vessel upon which he sailed from Vera Cruz to Havana was caught in a gale on the Gulf and foundered, but after living in peril for thirteen days its passengers and crew were rescued. Returning from this trip Bolivar was sent to Spain to complete his education, and was received at court, where his maternal family were in great favor. There he had an adventure which, in the light of events that have since transpired, might be considered ominous. The Prince Royal Ferdinand and he were one day playing battle-door and shuttle-cock in the court-yard of the palace, when they quarrelled, and the young republican smote the heir-apparent to the throne of Spain over the head with his bat. This was a crime, but the Queen, Marie Louise, who appears to have been a sensible woman, insisted that he should not be punished, because the prince, in inviting Bolivar to play, had descended to his level, and should take the consequences. It was from Ferdinand, a few years after, that Bolivar wrested the colony of Venezuela.

After spending some time at Madrid, Bolivar made a tour of Europe with his tutor, and remained through the winter at Paris, where the great Napoleon, then First Consul, was just inaugurating the brilliant era of the restoration. By reason of his wealth, his social position, and the letters of introduction he brought, the young Venezuelan secured admission to the court, and attracted



the notice of Napoleon, who several times conversed with him concerning South American affairs. The youthful mind was profoundly impressed with the greatness as well as the condescension of "The Little Corporal," and undoubtedly this incidental contact with the conqueror of Europe furnished the foundation for his career, and awakened an ambition that was never quenched or satisfied. Upon his return to Madrid, Bolivar was married, before he was twenty, to the Señorita Teresa Toro y Alayaza, and sailed for his home in Caracas; but ten months after their arrival his wife died. The shadow of this sorrow hung over his whole life, and he must have loved the woman devotedly, for although he was a man of social disposition, and much courted by society because of his wealth, his talents, and his prominence, he never married again, and left no one to bear his name. The death of his wife also had a permanent influence upon his public career, even more, perhaps, than his impressions of Napoleon, for in a letter to a friend he once said that had she lived he would doubtless only have been known as the Alcalde of San Mateo, instead of the Liberator of half a continent.

"If I had not been bereaved," he wrote, "my life would have been very different. I loved her very much, and at her death I took an oath never again to marry. I abandoned my home and gave myself up to my ambition. The death of my wife placed me in the road of politics, and caused me to follow the chariot of Mars instead of the plough of Ceres."

The only living descendant or relative of Bolivar is his nephew, Don Fernando Bolivar, an aged and childless man, who recently resided near the United States Legation at Caracas. With his death the name of the Liberator dis-

appears, although he is reputed to have left many illegitimate children.

Much has been written by Bolivar's enemies concerning his relations with women, and if one-quarter of it is true he was a notorious and conscienceless *roué*. Even his biographer admits that he was a man of licentious habits, strong passions, and inordinately fond of pleasure, and there is a scandalous volume, printed in Paris in 1858, devoted exclusively to his adventures and amours. It may be found in nearly every library of note in South America, and has been widely read. The book is made up almost exclusively of letters written by his associates to their friends, recounting incidents in his career in Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru, and contains some of his own amorous correspondence with his mistresses. The title is deceptive, as it reads: "Memorias y Documentos par del la Independencia y Simon Bolivar," and the pseudonyme of the author and compiler is "Pravenena." There is no good biography of the Liberator in English, nor in Spanish, for that matter, for all the books about him have been written either by his devoted friends, who deify him, or by his rivals and enemies, who have endeavored to disparage his achievements and detract from his reputation. The most impartial biography was written by Dr. Larrazabal, and published by E. O. Jenkins, of New York, in 1865. But the character of the man—and there have been few abler statesmen or more accomplished courtiers, or men of greater military genius—can best be studied and judged by reading the somewhat tedious official collection of his correspondence published by the government of Venezuela.

After the death of his wife Bolivar returned at once to Europe, taking her body with him, and remained there for some years. Accompanied by his brother-in-law, Don Fer-

nando Toro, he went to Paris and witnessed the triumph of Napoleon; saw him seated upon the imperial throne and crowned as emperor. He spent many weeks in the court at the Tuileries and at the palace of Versailles, and followed the emperor to Milan, when he saw his coronation as King of Italy. Near Castiglione he witnessed the great review, and followed the train of the emperor to Florence, Rome, and Naples. Then he visited Egypt, and, returning to Rome, joined Don Simon Rodriguez, his former tutor at Caracas, under whose instruction he remained some time in studying ancient history and the classics among the ruins of the Eternal City. It was then and there, according to his own account and the corroborating testimony of Rodriguez, he formed the plans that he followed in his after-life, and reached a determination to give his strength, his talents, and his fortune to the liberation of his country. Seated one day upon Mount Aventino (*Sacrum Montem*) he grasped the hand of his tutor and swore, by that holy and historic land, to devote the rest of his life to the freedom of Venezuela.

Proceeding to Paris he made the acquaintance of Baron von Humboldt, who had just returned from his first visit to South America. Then he went to Holland, and from Hamburg sailed for the United States. He visited Boston, New York, Niagara Falls, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Mount Vernon, Richmond, and Charleston. At the latter port he found a vessel about to leave for Venezuela, and took passage in her for home, reaching Caracas during the latter days of 1806.

At the tomb of Washington he is said to have taken a second oath of devotion to the cause of Venezuelan independence, and to have made a vow to serve his country as he upon whose grave he stood had served the colonies of

North America. Washington had then been dead some years, but his widow was still surviving, and lived at Mount Vernon with her children.

At once upon his arrival at Caracas Bolivar became a leader among the revolutionary propagandists, and, with his two brothers and other young men of similar rank and wealth, entered the army, and commenced the work of converting their fellow-officers to the cause of freedom. Bolivar was at this time but twenty-five years old, and from his estates had an income of \$25,000 a year, which in those days was an enormous sum of money. And he owned over 1000 slaves, which were afterwards manumitted. He was under-size in stature, and of slight but muscular frame. A writer of the time, in giving a pen-picture of the future hero, said: "His eyes are large, dark, and languid; but when his attention is aroused they attest the internal fire and the overflowing soul. His movements are quick and determined, but graceful. He is fluent in speech, and nervously animated in his gestures, and his voice is sharp and clear. His complexion is naturally dark, but has been darkened more by exposure; his beard is trimmed to his cheeks and chin, according to the usages of the times; his eyebrows are thick and arched, and his mouth wears a pleasant but impatient expression. He stands erect, like a soldier, and has the muscles of an athlete. His horsemanship is superior, and as a swordsman he surpasses, because he was educated in the manly arts in the gymnasiums of Paris. His manners are those of an accomplished courtier; his wit is quoted in every salon in Caracas; he is a reigning favorite among his own sex, and especially among the ladies."

Torrente, a Spanish official writing at this time to his superiors at Madrid concerning the revolutionary move-

ment in Venezuela, speaks of "one Simon Bolivar, a lieutenant in the white battalion of Aragua, a turbulent youth, distinguished for his wit, his wealth, the illustriousness of his birth, and his immeasurable ambition," so that the designs of the young man had been revealed soon after his arrival. But Bolivar seems to have taken no part in the insurrection of Miranda in 1808, although he was present and a participant in some of the local outbreaks at Caracas. The repressive measures of the Spanish governor compelled the young patriots to conceal their movements, and it was their habit to meet as if socially, and not in the city, but at the *estancias*, or plantations, of their friends, under the pretence of celebrating their birthdays and the anniversaries of their patron saints. In 1810 Bolivar was openly accused of sedition, and was compelled to conceal himself on an estancia in the valley of the Tuy, a considerable distance from the capital, to avoid arrest and imprisonment. Shortly after he sailed for Europe, where he met Miranda, and on the 5th of December, 1810, returned to Caracas, bringing the latter with him.

Then came the Declaration of Independence, the organization of the republic, with Miranda as military chief, the capture of the citadel at Puerto Cabello, the defeat of the revolutionary army at Victoria, the quarrel of Bolivar and Miranda, and the betrayal of the latter to the Spanish authorities, which is the most painful and questionable episode in the life of the Liberator. But his motives appear in his answer to the Spanish governor, when the latter thanked him for the service done to the king.

"I surrender Miranda to punish a traitor to my country," was the reply, "and not to do a service to the king."

The governor was about to order Bolivar's arrest, when one of his aides interposed.

"Don't mind this rash youth," he said. "He has done us a good service. Give him a passport and let him go."

When the revolutionists had recovered from their demoralization Bolivar became their leader, and continued as such until the end of the war. Then he united Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador in a confederation, and became their first president. Leaving the government in charge of the vice-president, he went to Peru and Bolivia, where he took command of the revolutionary armies, and accomplished their independence. He resigned the dictatorship of Peru in 1826 and became "Perpetual President and Protector" of Bolivia, but the following year returned to his own country, and was re-elected president. But General Paez, who had been one of his most effective aids in the revolution, defied his authority, assumed the dictatorship of Venezuela, and proclaimed its separation from the confederation. The Colombians still supported Bolivar, and again elected him president. He returned to Caracas, but his native country refused to receive him. His banishment was decreed, and he took refuge at Santa Marta, where, a few months later, he died of a broken heart after writing an address to his fellow-countrymen, in which he reproached them for their ingratitude to one who had devoted his whole life and his entire fortune to secure their liberty.

The house in which Bolivar died was a deserted little country château, or *quinta*, as it is called in Colombia, about five miles from the ancient and decayed town of Santa Marta. The plantation was known as "San Perro," and belonged to a friend with whom the Liberator had been intimate at Bogota. When he was expelled from Venezuela he happened to meet this friend, and, being ill and despondent, gladly accepted an invitation to spend

a few months of rest and recreation at his quiet retreat. There he retired, and his whereabouts was unknown to the public. Few of the people of the then active and influential city of Santa Marta were aware that the leader of their fight for liberty was so near them, or he might have received more attention during his dying days. Bolivar's host returned to Bogota, at his request it is said, to ascertain public sentiment and the political situation, while he remained in seclusion, but with no company but the servants of the quinta. For several weeks he was engaged in the preparation of his farewell address; and in its pathetic and reproachful lines there seems evidence of a premonition that his end was near. On the 17th of December, 1830, he breathed his last, with none but the Indian attendants around him.

The house is now preserved with some care, and contains a bust in marble and several portraits of the Liberator. It is seldom visited because it is so inaccessible. A steamer visits Santa Marta from Savanilla, Colombia, twice a month, but the city is no longer of any commercial importance, and its population has decreased with its trade.

## CHAPTER VIII

### GUZMAN BLANCO AND OTHER RULERS OF VENEZUELA

Across the street from the old market-house at Caracas is a pretty plaza in which stands one of Guzman Blanco's many ornaments, a bronze statue of his father. The inscription is much criticised by those who are familiar with the history of Venezuela. It reads :

ANTONIO LEOCADIO GUZMAN,  
Secretary of the Liberator,  
Illustrious Leader  
in the  
Independence of South America,  
Editor of the *Venezuelano*,  
and Founder of the Liberal Party  
in Venezuela.

Then, by poetic license, for Guzman Blanco the son placed the statue here himself, appear the words :

The National Congress in 1882,  
expressing the desire of the people,  
erected this monument.

No one objects to the filial devotion which induced Guzman Blanco to erect a memorial to his father, who was, during his long and eventful life, one of the most prominent politicians and ablest leaders in the country, but the



line that is most criticised is that which attempts to bring upon him a part of the reflected glory of Bolivar. It is true that the senior Guzman was his private secretary at one time, and owed his start in life to Bolivar's favor; but it is also true that the Liberator was betrayed by him, that he was one of the leaders of the revolution which overthrew the government of Bolivar, and as an official of the revolutionary government signed the decree expelling his former friend and patron from the country he had liberated—a cruel and unjustifiable crime, for which the only excuse was the jealousy of ambitious rivals. It was this blow that broke Bolivar's heart, and Antonio Leocadio Guzman was the last man from whom he expected such ingratitude.

Dr. Guzman was for nearly fifty years a conspicuous figure in Venezuelan politics. He was before the people of that country longer than any other politician in its history—yes, twice as long—and there is scarcely an office in the civil list that he did not at some time occupy in his eventful career. He began as private secretary to Bolivar, the Liberator, and when he died was Minister of Exterior Relaciones under his son, then president. The senior Guzman held one or another of the cabinet portfolios from the time his son came into power until his death, and his name is almost as closely interwoven into Venezuelan history before that time as that of Guzman Blanco has been since.

The father belonged to one of the first families of Caracas, of pure Spanish stock and aristocratic lineage. They had some property, but it was swallowed up in the revolution for independence, during which, in 1818, he became the private secretary of Simon Bolivar; but in 1829, as one of the officials of the revolutionary government, with General Paez and Dr. Penja, he signed a decree repudiating the authority of his patron and benefactor, and expelling

him from the country he had given freedom. There is a good deal of mist hanging over the history of those times. The most reliable accounts of events, however, may be obtained in a History of Venezuela, published in Paris in 1883, by Dr. Maria Rojas.

The expulsion of Bolivar from his native land almost immediately after its liberty through his efforts was complete, as well as the disintegration of the original Republic of Colombia in 1830, were largely due to the influence of Guzman the elder upon the ambition of General Paez. This republic, as will be remembered, was composed of three states, Venezuela, New Granada (or Colombia, as it is now known), and Ecuador, which had their federal capital at Bogota, and five times in succession elected Bolivar to the presidency. The confederation was unnatural, because of geographical and topographical reasons. It was almost impossible for the interior cities to communicate with the capital. Every man and every message had to go to the coast, and then by a sailing-vessel, and it was often six months before events that occurred at one end of the country were known at the other. Even now it requires at least thirty days to send a communication from Caracas to Bogota, and twice that time to communicate with Quito. But that was not the reason of the dissolution of the republic, nor was it found in the wishes of the people, but in the jealousy and ambition of Paez, who, when Bolivar was banished and Venezuela became an independent republic, was its first president.

✓ Paez was one of the most eminent and successful leaders of the revolution against Spain. To him as much as to any man, with the exception of Simon Bolivar, Venezuela owes her independence. In his final victory over the Spanish forces at Carabobo, near Valencia, on the 24th of June,

1821, he wiped out the Spanish army on the northern coast of the continent, and with the capture of Puerto Cabello, shortly after, the last vestige of Spanish authority disappeared. Paez was a *llanero*, a cowboy, on the *llanos* or plains of the Orinoco, and at the age of eighteen was superintendent of a large cattle estate. After the declaration of independence he raised a regiment of *llaneros*, who for some time carried on the guerilla method of warfare, but finally acknowledged the leadership of Bolivar and became a part of the regular forces, with Paez second in command to the liberator.

General Paez is the only man who ever fought a naval battle on horseback, and he, with his cavalry, actually attacked and captured a fleet of ships.

While Bolivar was trying to cross the Apure River with his army during the struggle for independence, he was prevented by a half-dozen or more Spanish gunboats, which anchored in the stream and moved up and down as he did.

"I would give the world to have possession of that flotilla," exclaimed he to Paez one day, "for I can never cross the river as long as it is there. If it belonged to us instead of the enemy the crossing would be an easy thing."

"I will have those *flecheras* [ships] or die!" exclaimed Paez; and, calling upon his *llaneros*, he exclaimed: "Let those follow Tio who dare!"

"Tio" was a pet name by which Paez was known among his desperate followers, but he never used it himself except in an emergency. He spurred his stallion into the stream, followed by three thousand *llaneros*, and their horses, which are taught to swim as well as to gallop, carried them directly to the gun-boats. It was night. The Spanish fleet was taken entirely unawares. The *llaneros* clambered from their saddles to the decks of the vessels, and then let their

horses swim back to shore. Thus, after cutting off their own retreat, it was a question of win or die, so they fought desperately, and every vessel was captured. It is one of the most remarkable incidents in modern warfare.

✓ Paez was president of Venezuela from 1831 to 1835, and Guzman the elder was one of his active supporters and prominent subordinates. Dr. Jose Maria Vargas, perhaps the most eminent scholar Venezuela has ever produced, being especially famous as a mathematician and astronomer, was the second president, but held office only one year, and had a stormy administration. During that short time he resigned twice, abdicated once, and was then expelled from the country. The remainder of his term was occupied by three vice-presidents, acting under the dictation of Paez, who succeeded to the executive power again after the constitutional interval in 1839. It was during this, his second term, that Paez attempted to partially atone for the crime of banishing Bolivar. In 1842 he brought home the bones of the Liberator from Santa Marta, and deposited them with marked honors in the Caracas cathedral.

The next president was Jose Tadeo Monagas. During all these years Antonio Leocadio Guzman had borne an active part in the political affairs of the country, and had held office almost continuously. And now he wanted to be president. But it was the will of Paez, who was just as much of a "boss" in the country then as Guzman Blanco was twenty-eight years later, that Monagas should have the next term. Dr. Guzman declined to wait, determined to test the strength of the Llanero Dictator, and organized a new party known as the "Liberals." He was at this time editor of *El Venezuelano*—a newspaper which is as famous in that country and occupied the same position as the

*National Intelligencer* once did at Washington—and was not only the ablest writer but the foremost orator of Venezuela. He made the canvass, but in the midst of it was accused of sedition because of some editorials in his paper, sent to prison, and sentenced to death by Paez—the second great man whose patronage he had enjoyed, and whom he endeavored to overthrow.

Monagas was elected, but at once lost the support of Paez by extending a pardon to Dr. Guzman, the opposition candidate, and by forming a liberal ministry. Dr. Guzman and his adherents always claimed that he had a majority of the votes at this election even though he was in prison, and that Monagas was a usurper; but the actual truth is difficult to discover. At any rate, Paez and his party, who put Monagas in power, were trying to throw him out two months afterwards, but were unsuccessful. After a long and bloody war Paez was captured, imprisoned for several months, and the death penalty, having been revoked, was banished from the country in May, 1850. He remained in New York until 1859, during which time the Monagas party had control of the government. The brothers of that name succeeded each other as presidents, and Antonio Leocadio Guzman was uppermost in their councils. Monagas gradually drifted away from the liberal principles he originally had espoused, and became the head of what was known as the oligarchical party. The several factions in opposition united, and called upon Paez to return from New York and become their leader in a revolution. But just as he was starting for Venezuela he slipped upon the pavement and broke his leg. This lost him a great opportunity, and made him a cripple for life. ✓

General Falcon, the recognized head of the party known as "Los Liberales," who also had been banished by Mo-

nagas, was then invited to take the lead in the revolutionary movement, and, landing in Venezuela from the little island of Curaçoa, which has always been a nursery of conspiracies, proclaimed the Federation. There had been more or less fighting all through the Monagas dynasty, but now began a genuine struggle that involved the entire country, known as the Five Years' War. In 1861 Falcon endeavored to persuade Paez to represent him at Washington, but the latter refused to do so, and in 1862 joined the opposition. Taking the field, he was defeated, again banished, and died in New York in 1873, at the advanced age of eighty-three years.

For a time during these years Dr. Guzman is lost sight of, but he ultimately turned up as a vigorous and successful supporter of Falcon. He could never have been reconciled to Paez, and the feud not only lasted during his life, but was inherited by his posterity. In 1888, soon after Dr. Rojas-Paul came into the presidency, he restored the bones of the great llanero to their native soil, as the latter had restored the bones of Bolivar. Against this Guzman Blanco protested, and it was his first break with the people.

The dust of Paez was brought back to the fatherland and sacredly enclosed in a marble tomb beside that of Bolivar, but so bitter was Guzman Blanco against the memory of the man who condemned his father to death that he threatened to have it cast out as soon as he returned to Venezuela. He was absent at the time, or the plans could never have been carried through; but under the direction of the government there were impressive ceremonies, and the whole city of Caracas was decorated, except the residences of and the buildings owned by Guzman Blanco and the members of his family. They were conspicuously bare, and when the procession passed them there was not so much

as a flag in sight. Every blind was closed so as to shut out the sights and the sounds, and Guzman Blanco's sister, Señora Vallenilla, would not even permit her children to witness the parade or any of the ceremonies. One of her little boys was asked the reason by a playmate next day, and replied in most indignant tones:

"Why should we do honor to Paez? Did he not order my grandfather to be shot? A curse on his ashes! If I could reach them I would throw them into the sewer."

This, from a child of thirteen years, shows the sentiments of the family.

It was in the Five Years' War that General Guzman Blanco came to the front. He was born in 1830, and educated in the best schools of the country. Dr. Vargas, the ex-president, who after his abdication forswore politics forever and returned to his old chair in the University, for which he was much better qualified, was his tutor when he was a youth and prepared him for college, it being the custom in those days, as it is now, for the members of the faculty to take private pupils. Guzman Blanco was intending to study medicine, but, under the influence of Dr. Vargas, abandoned it for the law.

Instead of becoming an apothecary Guzman Blanco gained the degree of Doctor of Jurisprudence at the University, and took a journey abroad before commencing practice. Through the influence of his father he was appointed secretary of legation at Washington, and resided in the latter city in 1856 and 1857. In 1858, when the elder Guzman fell out with Monagas, the son lost his position and returned to Venezuela, where he found that his father had been sent into exile. Nor was his presence welcome to the administration, for he was a vigorous and active young man of twenty-eight, with ability and determi-

nation. He was forbidden to leave the city of Caracas for a time, and was then told to go, and joined his father at St. Thomas. There he met General Falcon, also an exile, but afterwards the Liberal leader, and accompanied him to Venezuela in 1859, when the federation was proclaimed.

The young lawyer proved to be an able and successful soldier, and showed so much military genius that he was soon in command of a division. In 1863, Falcon entered Caracas in triumph, and called an assembly of eighty citizens to form a government. They named him president, and Guzman Blanco vice-president; and the latter also took the portfolio of finance. He was then elected to the Chamber of Deputies and made speaker of that body. In 1867 he was sent to Europe to negotiate a settlement of the national debt and to effect a new loan. During his absence, the *Olegarquia*, the old Monagas faction, was re-suscitated and reorganized as *El Partido Azul*, the Blue Party, so called from a badge they wore. They were strengthened by fusion with a section of the Liberal Party which had fallen out with Falcon, whose followers were known as the Yellow Party. They together issued a *pronunciamento* in favor of Monagas, who was then nearly ninety years of age, but retained his mental and physical vigor. President Falcon was compelled to abandon the capital, and went into temporary eclipse. His government fell to pieces, and he soon after sailed for Europe in very poor health to try the waters at Carlsbad. On his return two years later he died at Martinique, a French island of the West Indies.

When the government he represented was dissolved, Guzman Blanco returned from London to Caracas, and arrived in August, 1868. On the 14th of that month he issued invitations to a grand ball. His purpose is not



clear. Some of his enemies maintain that it was to secure favor with the dominant party ; others, that it was to test his popularity with the view of organizing a revolution. His friends have always held that he intended to gather the best men of all factions under his roof with the object of bringing about a general reconciliation. It ended in a riot. Few guests came, but the streets outside were crowded with people, who first stoned and then sacked the house, destroying its entire contents. That the existing government sympathized with the rioters is shown by the fact that the secretary of war and the governor of the state, who were both present, declined to use their influence and authority to protect the property, although repeatedly appealed to. Guzman Blanco narrowly escaped assassination by the mob, and with his family succeeded in reaching the residence of Mr. Partridge, the United States Minister, under whose protection they remained until they could leave the country.

Guzman Blanco then went abroad again, but in the winter of 1870 reached Curagoa, where he organized a revolution, and on the 14th of February landed upon the coast of Venezuela at the head of an army of invasion. The old Liberal Party flocked to his standard, and after a few stubborn fights with the forces of the government he found himself in possession of the capital and was declared dictator. Two years later the entire country had acknowledged his authority, and in 1873 he was elected constitutional president. From that date his power was not disputed, and he reigned like a czar until the beginning of 1888, when the president, Dr. Rojas-Paul, and the Congress began to show signs of independence and to ignore his orders. As the constitution then prohibited a president from being his own successor, Guzman Blanco occupied

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the office only alternate terms. In the interval a substitute selected by himself filled the executive chair, while he has spent the most of his vacations in Europe, with the credentials of a minister plenipotentiary, and directed the policy of the government by mail and cable.

The chief characteristics of Guzman Blanco are his intelligence, his vanity, and his determination. He not only created statues in honor of himself all over the country, filled the public buildings with his portraits, christened states, provinces, cities, theatres, bridges, docks, railroads, reservoirs, parks, boulevards, streets, and market-houses with his name, imbedded tablets in every building he erected and repaired to show by whom the work was done, and assumed a title, "The Illustrious American," but he covered his breast with decorations—some sought from the kings and emperors of Europe, and others granted to himself under his own orders by a Congress he controlled. Nor is this all. While he was in power he required every book printed in Venezuela to bear the announcement that it was published under his administration. Every sheet of music was marked in the same way. In the list of subscribers to the telephone service in those days his name appears in black capitals, like that of the Almighty in the prayer-books, while those of all others are in ordinary type.

When Guzman was young, as I have said, he studied medicine for a few months. Soon after he became president he called upon the University for a medical diploma, and got one, so that he can write M.D. in the procession of letters that follow his name. Every degree in the catalogue except that of Doctor of Divinity was granted him. It is a curious ambition, but anything that would add to his glory he grasped at, even if it were but a rosette or a medal. He is an honorary member of all the scientific and

literary societies he had influence with, and at one time proposed to make himself Rector of the University, but was compelled to forego this honor because the law requires this officer to devote his undivided attention to the interests of the institution.

On the anniversary of Humboldt's birth the scientific societies at Caracas decided to have a celebration, and appointed a committee to invite the Dictator to preside over the ceremonies. He asked what the programme was to be. They replied that it was simply made up of a series of papers by the learned men of the societies, with music during the intervals. Guzman Blanco said he would preside if the authors of the papers would submit them to him for revision. The committee was dumfounded, and retired to recover their wits. What his object might be in making this extraordinary condition they could not imagine. He certainly could not suspect them of treasonable designs, of an intention to read revolutionary or seditious documents under the pretence of celebrating Humboldt's birthday. None of them were politicians, few of them cared who was president, and all were favorable to the continuance of Guzman in power. Finally, it was suggested by somebody that the Dictator was seeking flattery, and believed each essayist would be more likely to insert a paragraph in his sketch of Humboldt praising Guzman Blanco if they knew the papers were to be read by him in advance.

This was accepted as the genuine motive of his demand, and the societies in a joint meeting declined to concede it. They decided that it would not be a dignified proceeding for a party of learned pundits to bow down before a military dictator and submit their scientific theses to him for criticism as school-boys lay their compositions before a pedagogue. They determined to abandon the celebration

in preference to so humiliating themselves, and a committee of three were appointed to so inform the president. They called upon him forthwith, and, in the most gentle and diplomatic phrases they could frame, notified him that his conditions could not be complied with, and that the proposed ceremonies would not be held if he insisted upon them. Guzman asked their reasons, and when he heard them he inquired if the decision was unanimous. They said it was, whereupon, with a sarcastic smile, he opened a drawer in his desk and produced four out of the seven essays that were to be read, which had been secretly submitted for his approval by the authors while these proceedings were going on, and each one of them contained a fulsome tribute to General Antonio Guzman Blanco, LL.D., Ph.D., M.D., C.E., etc., "The Illustrious American," "The Regenerator of Venezuela," etc., for his zeal and generosity in the encouragement of science, art, and so on.

But he was not all vanity. He wanted to know. He grasped at knowledge just as he grasped at money and honors. He was a student as well as a soldier, and few rulers of nations have ever taken so much personal interest in the affairs of state as he showed when he was president. The people of Venezuela lack public enterprise. If it had not been for the energy of Guzman Blanco and his pride the city of Caracas and the country at large would never have reached their present state of progress, and a man who has done so much for his people can be excused for his vanity.

The manner in which he learned the English language is a good illustration of his untiring industry and determination. He was able to speak a little English when he was secretary of legation at Washington, and learned a little more during his visits to London, although he always preferred to use French, which he speaks very well, in his of-

ficial interviews. But while he was president he made up his mind to master English thoroughly, and one evening summoned Dr. Ernst, of the university faculty, to the palace. It was ten o'clock before he was at leisure, and about that hour he came bustling into his library, and said :

"Doctor, I want you to teach me English."

"Very well," was the reply; "when shall we begin?"

"Now."

"But I brought no text-books with me," said the doctor.

"I will get a primer to-morrow, and then we can take it up. The best way is to begin at the beginning like a child."

The general opened a drawer of his desk, and took out a well-thumbed primer that belonged to his little girl.

"I have been through this by myself," he said, "and understand it thoroughly, as I will demonstrate to you if you will be good enough to question me," and the professor, taking the book, put the Dictator through such an examination as he would give a child.

"Very good," exclaimed the doctor an hour later.

"To-morrow I will get the next higher text-book, and we will have another lesson."

"But if you are not weary I prefer to go on to-night," was the reply. "I have some English books on the shelves here," and going to his library he took down a *Life of John C. Calhoun*. Opening it the two men, sitting side by side, commenced with the first line, Dr. Ernst pronouncing and explaining the meaning of each word, with its derivation and grammatical relation to the rest of the sentence, and the Dictator repeating everything after him until every point was impressed upon his memory. And they kept at it until two o'clock in the morning, when Guzman Blanco yawned and looked at his watch.

"I was up at five o'clock this morning," he said, "and

have been working hard all day. I think we better end the lesson here."

"When shall I come again?" asked the doctor.

"At ten o'clock to-morrow night," was the reply.

And for several months thereafter the two men, both of them mature and famous, sat down in the library at ten o'clock every night of the week and read the *Life of John C. Calhoun*, keeping up the lessons often as late as two or three o'clock in the morning. When the bulky volume was finished the general could not only read but speak English very well. To vary the monotony of the instruction Guzman would write exercises upon a little slate belonging to one of his children, which he would fetch from the nursery, and sometimes, when Dr. Ernst would come to the lesson, he would find scraps of paper which his distinguished pupil had been covering with exercises in his leisure moments during the day.

Guzman Blanco's filial, paternal, and fraternal affection was one of his chief characteristics. No man ever showed greater reverence to the memory of his father, nor greater devotion to his children. He has seven; three of them boys. One is a cripple, and his father is very fond of him. One reason for his removal to Paris was to secure medical treatment for the boy. The eldest daughter is the Duchess de Morny, who was married at Paris in 1888.

Mrs. Guzman Blanco was celebrated for her beauty, and was considered the handsomest woman in Venezuela. Her portrait has been painted a hundred times, almost as often as that of her distinguished husband; and sculptors have reproduced in marble her bust and her hands, which are models of shapeliness; and she is as lovely in character as in person. The enemies of Guzman could find nothing to criticise in his wife except her devotion to her husband,

and she was greatly beloved at Caracas by the poor as well as the rich. Her charity was bountiful, her graciousness genuine, her sympathy sincere. She was dignified, and carried herself in a manner becoming her position without being ostentatious or exclusive. Those who know her best love her the most. She had several intimate friends among the ladies of the American colony at Caracas, and appeared to seek their society in preference to that of the natives.

When the family of the Dictator were at home there was usually a good deal going on in a social way. At their city house, at their country residence in the pretty village of Antimino, at their coffee plantation near Caracas, and at Macuto, the seaside resort, where they had a cottage, Mrs. Guzman Blanco and the young ladies were always surrounded with a gay party of friends; and their frequent formal entertainments were always upon a grand scale. The general's vanity displayed itself in the elegance and novelty of his hospitality. He made his money easily, had plenty of it, liked to pour it out for the gratification of his friends, and lived like a king. When he was to give a dinner-party the country was scoured for luxuries, and he had his favorite fish, the red-snapper, brought up from La Guayra by a special train so that it might be perfectly fresh. The resources of Caracas are somewhat limited in this particular. Few novelties can be procured, but like the old Roman emperors Guzman Blanco had dishes invented for the entertainment of his friends.

And the stories they tell of him are very much like those one hears of the ancient czars of Russia, whom he in many respects resembles—in his barbaric taste for display, in his ungovernable temper, and in the absolute despotism with which he ruled. One night when Guzman went to the opera—and he seldom attended, although he usually

paid a subsidy of \$40,000 a year to sustain Italian opera in Caracas—the prima-donna was in a pout and refused to sing. She had had a quarrel with the impresario, and Guzman was kept waiting in his box for half an hour after the time for the performance to begin. Then, losing patience, he sent an aide-de-camp to the stage door to inquire into the cause of the delay. When the report was received he sent back word that unless the dispute was settled and the opera commenced in ten minutes he should have the whole party arrested. So he did. The manager and all the singers involved in the controversy were marched off to the calabozos and kept there until they were penitent.

Around the pedestal of his statue on El Calvario was a fence made of muskets captured by him in the war that led to his dictatorship, and on the several holidays celebrated in his honor a candle was placed in the muzzle of each, which made a brilliant illumination. There were wires stretched between the fence and the base of the statue, which on these occasions were loaded with lamps, and the bronze figure of "The Illustrious American" rose like a Phoenix out of a sea of fire. There were four of those holidays. The 20th of February is his birthday; the 27th of April is the anniversary of his capture of Caracas—the beginning of his reign—and the 13th of June is the day of St. Anthony, his patron saint. All those were for several years celebrated *con mucho gusto* by the people throughout the country, by a suspension of business, processions, fireworks, eulogies, the decoration of his statues, etc., and one other day in October also, but its exact significance I could not ascertain. The first omission of these ceremonies was on the 27th of April, 1889, when the people would not permit the government to carry out the usual programme.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GUZMAN BLANCO

EVERY one who watched the course of events in Venezuela knew that the power of Guzman was waning, and, probably realizing it himself, he left the country at the end of his last presidential term, bearing a commission as envoy extraordinary to all the courts of Europe. He has since resided in Paris, where he purchased one of the finest places on the Champs Élysées, and married his daughter to the Duc de Morny. Some people think it was the fear of assassination that took the general away, for the country was full of those who had suffered from his tyranny, and many of them would not have hesitated to treat him to a bullet or a knife. But the best informed say that his departure was actuated by several motives: first, a desire for a change of climate and a taste for the gayeties of the French capital on his own account, as well as the gratification of his family; second, an ambition to create a display in Paris, to appear as a star in a new firmament, and to mingle with the grandees of Europe, none of whom can surpass him in wealth, appearance, or deportment; third, a desire to make money by the sale of concessions, for which he had *carte blanche* from the government of Venezuela; fourth, to settle some serious diplomatic controversies; and, finally, to withdraw for a time from the scene of his achievements, with the expectation of regaining his popu-

larity and power upon his return. Before going Guzman secured the establishment of a line of cable between Venezuela and France in order that he might be constantly and instantly apprised of events at home, and give directions concerning the conduct of the government; and it may be said that he found the wire very useful.

The standard of political and personal morality, as all who have studied Spanish-American history know, is not so high in the tropics as in the temperate zones. The cause lies in the false systems of social as well as political education. Authority has been attained by favoritism and force, and in a terrible series of political convulsions the strongest and not always the fittest have survived. In the republic, so called, of Venezuela, there has seldom been an honest election of a ruler, and nearly every one of the long list of presidents, dictators, and military chieftains who have governed the country has obtained his authority either by force of arms or by conspiracy. That General Guzman Blanco, during the nineteen years he was in power, showed himself the ablest or at least the most successful ruler Venezuela has ever known will not be disputed. And if his patriotism was not so pure and unselfish as that of Miranda, if his statesmanship was not so broad as that of Bolivar, if his scholarship was not so profound as that of Vargas, nor his military genius so notable as that of Paez, it will not be questioned that under his government, autocratic and corrupt as it was, Venezuela made greater progress, and took a higher stand among the nations of the earth, than under any of his predecessors.

In any age and in any nation Guzman Blanco would have been an eminent man; and having been placed by Providence in the midst of a restless, passionate, and rebellious people, he ruled and led them in a manner that will make his dy-

nasty—as the successive administrations from 1871 to 1889 may be termed—the most prosperous as well as the most progressive the nation has ever known. When the history of Venezuela comes to be written by an impartial pen, and the errors of the autocrat, like the vices of Bolivar, have been obscured by time, those years will furnish an epoch notable for material advancement and development. As a distinguished foreigner who has resided in Caracas for a generation remarked :

“ When there were \$10,000,000 in the treasury, Guzman expended eight for the benefit of the people and stole two; whereas most of the presidents would have stolen eight and left two.”

At the westerly limits of Caracas there rises a noble hill, four hundred feet or more in height, and overlooking the entire valley between the two ranges of mountains. Upon its summit, facing the capital, there once stood a heroic statue of General Guzman Blanco, which was afterwards torn down by an angry mob. It was a massive figure of bronze in citizen dress, with a long cloak falling from its shoulders. In his hand he held the constitution of the country, a half-open scroll, and his eyes rested upon the city which was so much improved and beautified by his enterprise. The statue reminded one of the splendid figure of Germania, “ The Watch on the Rhine,” erected upon the mountain near Bingen to commemorate the conclusion of the Franco-Prussian war. It was one of the most impressive in all the world, standing as it did in silhouette against the sky, visible from all points in the Guaire valley as well as from the monstrous peaks that enclose it.

When Guzman was at the summit of his popularity and power, when he was an idol as well as a despot, that hill was used as a cemetery and called “ El Calvario ” (Calvary).

Guzman removed the bodies to a distant slope, and at extravagant expense laid out pleasure-grounds where the resting-place of the dead had been. A broad, winding road, shaded by noble trees and perfumed by the exotics of the country, was conducted about the breast of the hill leading from the city to the summit, and was called "El Paseo de Guzman Blanco." It serves for Caracas's principal "lung," as some physician has designated the breathing-places of a city—a popular and much frequented resort for the common people as well as for the aristocracy. On holiday nights the statue was illuminated by little oil-lamps which were strung on wires about the pedestal, and was then seen in its greatest splendor. "The Illustrious American" appeared to the peons of the plantations and the charcoal burners in the mountains to be arising out of a cauldron of fire, like one of the ancient martyrs.

Guzman Blanco was not modest. That is the least of his sins, but although he designed and erected this splendid testimonial to his own greatness, he concluded that it would look better in the eyes of posterity if he gave some one else the credit for the artistic design and the noble idea, so the inscription read :

To  
The Illustrious American,  
The Pacificator and Regenerator  
of the  
United States of Venezuela,  
GENERAL GUZMAN BLANCO,  
The Gratitude of Caracas.  
1874.

On the other side of the pedestal was another legend, reading :

Guzman Blanco dissipated anarchy,  
and established the liberty, the peace,  
and the prosperity of the Republic  
at home as well as its dignity  
abroad.

All of which is true ; and while this bit of vanity caused considerable amusement to those who know how the monument was erected, he whose achievements it was intended to commemorate was entitled to the honor.

Another statue which Guzman erected in his own honor, ✓  
in the plaza between the University and the Capitol, was twice pulled down, and the leader in the first indignity was the Dictator's own nephew, the general in command of his army, and the man he is said to have chosen as his successor in power. The circumstances were quite remarkable, and involve a romance in which an American girl figured as the heroine.

Mr. Russell, of Boston, was United States Minister at ✓  
Caracas during the Hayes administration. Being directed by Secretary Evarts to press the payment of the claims of certain American citizens for losses incurred during the war by which Guzman came into power, he replied that there were only two methods by which the money could be collected. One method, he said, was to send a man-of-war to bombard La Guayra, and the other was to offer Guzman a share of the money. This indiscreet despatch, by a blunder of a clerk at the Department of State in Washington, was published, and when an official translation was sent to "The Illustrious American" he very promptly sent Mr. Russell his passports, and ordered him to leave Venezuela instantan. There was a New York steamer in the harbor at La Guayra, and Mr. Russell was escorted on board by a file of soldiers.

The minister had a pretty daughter to whom General Ibarra, the nephew and favorite of Guzman, was engaged, and when the young man heard of the affair he went to headquarters to protest against the indignities offered his prospective father-in-law. The president gave the young man his choice between the girl and the official honors and prospects he enjoyed. Breaking his sword over his knee, Ibarra threw the pieces at Guzman's head and left the palace. That afternoon a decree was issued relieving General Ibarra from the command of the army and cancelling his commission. During the night Ibarra gathered a few of his cronies, sawed through the bronze legs of the horse on which the effigy of his uncle sat, and, hitching a rope around the body, hauled it over. Then he saddled a mule, rode down the mountain path to La Guayra, joined his sweetheart on the steamer, and sailed for New York before his act had been discovered. He married the girl, but was too wise to return to Venezuela until his distinguished uncle had left that country. This was one of the greatest humiliations Guzman Blanco ever suffered, and no one has ever dared to mention the name of Ibarra in his presence since.

The statue was an imposing one, of heroic size and admirably moulded, although there was one singular defect: the mouth of the horse was wide open, but had no teeth; and I have heard an anecdote of Guzman regarding that defect which illustrates his character and the condition of affairs that existed at Caracas during the reign of the despot.

One morning as a celebrated scientist, who had been the director of the university for many years, was passing into the building, he was accosted by a party of friends that stood by inspecting the statue, then only recently erected, and asked what he thought of it.

"I don't think anything of it," responded the blunt and candid professor. "The horse has no teeth"—and he passed on to his class-room. That afternoon an aide-de-camp of the president summoned the professor to the palace. As he entered the presence of Guzman, the latter said :

"Professor, I have been informed that you have been criticising my statue."

"I have not," was the reply. "It is not my business to criticise your statue or any of your acts."

"But I am told that this morning, in the presence of several citizens, you ridiculed it."

"That is not true. I simply called attention to the fact that the horse had no teeth, which is a serious defect."

"Hereafter, sir," said the Dictator, sternly, "you will take care not to make any such remarks, or you will find yourself in trouble."

"General Guzman," replied the unabashed professor, "you have done me the honor to elevate me to the directorship of the University, and to intrust to me the chair of natural history. You have placed in front of the University a model of the noblest of all animals, to be admired and studied, not only by the citizens of this place, but by the students under my charge. It is my duty, sir, to point out to those students the imperfections in that model, and to say to them that a soldier of your ability and intelligence should not have been imposed upon by a pretended artist who has assumed that you would ride a toothless horse."

General Guzman saw the point, and attempted to evade it by asking what the doctor thought of the rest of the statue.

"I have been able to see nothing but the mouth," was the diplomatic reply; "and if you have no further business with me, I desire to return to my classes."

But before he left the room, however, he was cautioned to beware of pretended friends, for there was nothing said or done in Caracas that was not reported at the president's headquarters.

In this statue Guzman was represented in the full uniform of a general, and in the act of raising his hat to acknowledge the plaudits of his admiring subjects. The inscription was even more pretentious than that of the El Calvario monument, and read :

To the Illustrious American,  
GENERAL GUZMAN BLANCO,  
President of the Republic  
A nation's gratitude

Upon the reverse of the pedestal were these words :

The peace and liberty,  
The administrative order,  
The intellectual and material progress  
which is due to  
GENERAL GUZMAN BLANCO,  
As well as the dignity and the honor  
of the Republic,  
which were restored by him,  
are the fittest pedestal  
for his statue.

Guzman Blanco was entitled to these memorials; even if he did erect them in his own honor they should have been allowed to stand. As the inscription recited, the restoration of Venezuela from a condition of political anarchy and commercial stagnation to peace and prosperity was due to his energetic rule; and although his methods were those of a tyrant, the results have been to the general welfare of the people. During the nineteen years he was in power,



Caracas became a city of importance, and the products of Venezuela became known in the markets of the world. Railroads were introduced, and the farthestmost portions of the republic were reached by telegraph lines; there were steamboats on the Orinoco, and the towns along the coast had regular and frequent facilities for transportation and communication. Modern methods were introduced in the transaction of business, labor-saving machinery increased the product of the plantations and the profits of its sale. Not only the capital, but the other cities of the country were improved and beautified, and Guzman Blanco did it all in the name of the government, or the government did it in the name of Guzman Blanco, which was practically the same thing.

It is said that when General Guzman Blanco called upon Baron de Rothschild in Paris to negotiate a loan for Venezuela he remarked, by way of compliment, that he was much honored by having an interview with the head of the richest banking-house in the world.

"And I am honored," was the reply of the baron, "by receiving a call from the richest man on earth."

"If you have me in mind," retorted Guzman, "you are mistaken. I am not so rich as represented; but had I all that is credited to me I would still be poor, very poor, in comparison with yourself and thousands of men in this and other countries."

"But I insist upon the truth of my assertion that you are the richest man in the world, for who else," exclaimed Rothschild, "has estates comprising six hundred thousand square miles of territory? Who else has an income of thirty-seven million dollars? Who else has two million and a half of slaves?"

Guzman said nothing in reply, but smiled significantly;

as much as to say, "I see that you understand the politics of Venezuela."

A gentleman who, not many years ago, obtained a valuable concession from General Guzman Blanco once related his experience to me. He said that he was kept waiting around the Casa Amarilla for three or four weeks, and did not seem to get on at all. Finally he told the Dictator that it would be impossible for him to remain in the country much longer, and that he wanted a final answer whether he could have the concession or not; that if it were not to be granted him he did not want to waste his time, and if he were to receive it he wanted to get at work and save the interest upon his money, which was lying idle. Guzman turned to him with some impatience, and said :

"Come to my country-house at Antimino at six o'clock to-morrow morning, and we will close this matter up."

The people of Venezuela are in the habit of getting up early in the morning, and General Guzman Blanco never had the reputation of a laggard, but six o'clock and at a farm seven miles in the country was rather an unusual appointment. But the gentleman said, "I'll be on hand, your excellency," and retired.

The next morning he was called at four, saddled a horse, and galloped out to Antimino, where he got a light breakfast, and was at the gate in front of the Dictator's residence before the clock in the parish church had struck six.

1 To his surprise he found twenty or thirty people standing or sitting around the grounds waiting to be received, and some of them men of importance, while the president sat upon the porch sipping his coffee and reading the morning paper. It was considered a dreadful breach of etiquette to interrupt the great man when he was reading, and there was not a person in the entire company who dared do it.

They simply stood or sat by where he could see them, and awaited his summons. But the Yankee marched boldly upon the porch, and said :

“Good-morning, general.”

Guzman Blanco looked up in surprise from his paper, but the Yankee, knowing his temper and peculiarities, did not wait for him to speak.

“In my country, general,” he said, “it is not the custom for great men to get up so early in the morning. They never commence business until the sun is a good deal higher than it is now. But it is also a point of honor to meet an engagement promptly, and although you invited me so early, you see I am here on time.”

The stern features of the Dictator relaxed into a smile.

“Have you had your coffee?” he asked.

“Yes, sir, at the hotel a few minutes ago.”

“But it must have been miserable stuff, and you ought to taste mine. I use none but what I grow on my own plantation, and always carry it with me no matter to what part of the world I go.” And ringing a bell at his side, he ordered a cup of coffee and a roll for his caller.

But the latter did not propose to waste his time, and immediately said, “You did me the honor to say yesterday that you would close up the business matter upon which I came from the States at our interview this morning, and I have come prepared to do so.”

“I wish that my people were as prompt as you. Our great fault as a nation is procrastination. If we were as prompt and as determined as your countrymen, Venezuela would be a richer and more productive nation.” And with that they went into the business. For two hours the details of the concession were discussed, and, being agreed upon, the two gentlemen went into the house, and, finding

the president's stenographer in his library, dictated to him the terms of the contract, which was very short. Then Guzman Blanco, turning to his guest, said :

"My secretary will have this written out to-morrow, and if you will then call at my office in town we will sign it. There are a number of people waiting to see me."

"I would prefer to wait myself, and have the document signed here to-day," was the Yankee's reply. "You said a little while ago that the great fault of your people was procrastination, and I propose that we avoid it this morning."

The secretary looked up in amazement. He had seen men sent to the calabozo for less than that, and evidently expected that the Dictator would call a policeman to take the Yankee in charge. Guzman was a little surprised at first, but seeing that his guest was not abashed, smiled, and said :

"That is a neat way of applying my philosophy to your own interest. We will wait until the document is written out, and sign it here."

Guzman handed a cigar to the Yankee, lit one himself, and then sat down for a chat while the secretary was writing. In a moment or two the director-general of police tapped at the door and said that he wanted to see the president concerning a matter that required his immediate attention.

"You will have to wait until I am through with this Yankee," said the president ; "he is teaching me the way they do business in the United States."

## CHAPTER X

### THE GOVERNMENT OF VENEZUELA

THE President of Venezuela is elected in a curious way. There are two branches of Congress. The senators are chosen by the legislatures, as ours are, only they send three from each of the states instead of two—a plan that would gratify a number of ambitious statesmen if it were adopted in this country. The members of the House of Representatives are elected by the people, and the apportionment is one to every 35,000 population.

At the opening of Congress every four years—it was recently every two—the twenty-four senators and the fifty-two representatives meet in joint assembly and vote by ballot for sixteen of their own number to act as a federal council. This council may issue decrees during the recess of Congress, which have the force of law until that body meets again; it may suspend the operation of laws that have been enacted until the Congress can have an opportunity to vote upon the question of their repeal; it may suspend or impeach before the Congress any official of the government, including the president himself, and designate one of the two vice-presidents to act in his place until he can be tried. And the council elects the president also, and two *designados*, as they call their vice-presidents. These are not only lineal successors to the presidency, when there is a vacancy in that office, but may be called upon at

any time to perform the duties of the chief executive temporarily, when that official is absent from the country or disabled by disease. The candidates for president may be members of the Congress, or members of the council, for that matter, but it is always pretty well known who will be chosen when the returns from the congressional elections come in, for the candidates represent a presidential ticket, as our electors do, and the act of the council in voting for president is therefore merely formal, like that of the electoral college in the United States. Thus the Congress is always in political sympathy with the executive, unless these co-ordinate branches, as has sometimes been the case, should fall out after the election. Every Congress chooses a new president, and he cannot be a candidate again until some one else has served.

For many years General Antonio Guzman Blanco was the ruler of Venezuela, whoever occupied the executive chair. The people went through the form of exercising their right of suffrage, the Congress elected councils, and the councils chose presidents, but the head of the government was always under Guzman Blanco's hat. But for the constitutional prohibition he might have been "perpetual president," as was Francia, of Paraguay, and by reason of his power and popularity he remained "an uncrowned king." Every alternate term he occupied the chair himself. During the interim he employed a substitute, whose general policy was governed by his will, while he went abroad with a *carte-blanche* all-around commission as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to the several courts of Europe, and enjoyed a vacation with diplomatic honors.

From 1884 to 1886 Guzman's substitute was General Joaquin Crespo, a mixed-breed soldier of brawn and mili-

tary ability, who had been his faithful lieutenant. Then he served part of a term himself, but before his time expired gave up the reins of government to Don Hermogenes Lopez, the *primero designado*, or vice-president, and went to Europe ostensibly to treat with Great Britain respecting the disputed boundary-line which has given so much trouble. In July, 1888, Dr. Juan Pablo Rojas-Paul was inaugurated. Crespo resisted. He had been president long enough to learn to like the office, its authority and emoluments, and desired a second term, but Guzman said "no," and ordered the election of Paul. Crespo was a popular soldier, and, relying on the support of the army, prepared a pronunciamiento, which is a synonyme for revolution. But Guzman had merely to frown, when the pronunciamientos, as a revolutionary party is called, scattered. Crespo managed to escape from the country, probably with the connivance of the government, for an exile is less bother than a prisoner, and took refuge in the Dutch colony of Curaçoa, a little island one night's sail from La Guayra, which for half a century has been to Venezuela what Key West is to Cuba—an asylum for conspirators. His emissaries, mostly men who held office under him when he was president, and expected to do so again if they could restore him to power, continued to plot, and, their plans being ripe, Crespo made his way to the Island of Trinidad, where the wonderful pitch lake is that supplies the asphaltum for our pavements. There he made preparations to attack the republic in the rear, as it were, and raise the standard of rebellion on the llanos that form the valley of the Orinoco. With a party of picked men at Port-of-Spain he boarded an ordinary passenger steamer, which he intended to seize as soon as it was out of the harbor, and with it sail up the Orinoco River to the interior; but he neglected to supply

his people with passage tickets, and when the purser attempted to collect their fare the row began prematurely. Several of the officers and seamen, as well as a number of the insurgents, were shot in the *mêlée*, but the latter were overcome, put in irons, and, with Crespo, delivered to the Venezuelan authorities. The ex-president spent several months a prisoner in the *cabildo* at Caracas, awaiting trial for murder and treason, but was finally pardoned and allowed to leave the country. In his exile he prepared for a second revolution, which was successful, and he now occupies the presidential chair again.

But not without an interval. In 1890 Andueza Palacio was elected, and served peacefully until 1892. In the meantime a convention of delegates was called, which prepared a new constitution, and, among other changes in the system of government, extended the presidential term from two to four years. Then arose a question whether this extension applied to the incumbent of the office. Andueza Palacio claimed that it did; others argued that it did not; that having been elected under the old constitution his term was limited to two years, and that the new provisions would apply only to his successors, who would be elected for four years. An appeal was made to the Supreme Court, which decided that Andueza Palacio was wrong, and that his authority expired in 1892. But he declined to vacate the office or to order an election.

Then Crespo, who had returned to the country, and been chosen a senator in congress from his state, declared a revolution, and after nearly a year of bloody warfare was victorious. In the fall of 1893 he captured Caracas, and proclaimed himself dictator, while Andueza Palacio fled to Paris, where he still resides in exile. When peace was fully restored he ordered a new election, and was



formally chosen president for a term of four years commencing in February, 1894.

General Crespo is in many respects a remarkable man. He comes from the llanos, or prairies, of the Orinoco valley, and was born on a ranche. His parents were of mixed blood, Indian and Spanish, but his face is a fine type of the mulatto. When only a boy he entered the army, by faithful and efficient service became the commander of a division before he was thirty years old, and during the long struggle of Guzman Blanco to obtain power was his ablest and most successful subordinate. When Guzman finally reached the presidency he made Crespo a lieutenant-general, and afterwards gave him command of the army of the republic.

Mrs. Crespo is also of humble origin and mixed blood, and a woman of strong character. Her ability in political intrigue has often been demonstrated, and her influence over her husband is greater than that of any man in Venezuela. Her ambition has often inspired, and her strength of purpose has often sustained, him in both military and political achievements, and during the last revolution she accompanied his army and shared his tent in a long and arduous campaign. She has also excellent business capacity, and during his years of exile has managed his estates with great ability and profit, furnishing the means by which he has been able to arm his troops and procure supplies. She has no taste for social enjoyment, and has the good sense to realize that she cannot shine as a society queen; but she has been a good mother, and is ambitious to fit her children for the station they will occupy. She is devoted to the church, generous to charitable objects, and has done much to improve the condition of the poor.

Juan Pablo Rojas-Paul was a lawyer, college professor, and literary man; and he was fifty-eight years old when inaugurated. He came from a family famous in the history of Venezuela. His maternal grandfather, the learned and eloquent Doctor Felipe Fermin Paul, represented the colony of Venezuela in the Spanish Cortes at Madrid during the days of the viceroys, was one of the signers of the Venezuelan Declaration of Independence, and an active aid and adviser of Bolivar. His father, Don Jose Ysidoro Rojas, was a lawyer of distinction, at one time a member of the cabinet, and for some years chief-justice of the Supreme Court. His paternal grandfather, Don Juan Rojas, was also a man of eminence, and president of the Central University of Venezuela. He calls himself Rojas-Paul, the first being his paternal and the latter his maternal family name, according to the custom of the country, like Guzman Blanco, whose father was Antonio Guzman, and whose mother was Señorita Blanco. Rojas-Paul is called doctor because he received the degree of LL.D. from the University of Caracas in 1852. He has been a professor in that institution, a member of the judiciary, a representative in Congress, and a member of the cabinet under several administrations, serving as secretary of state, secretary of the treasury, and secretary of the interior, so that he was well qualified by training and experience for the office of chief executive.

The President of Venezuela lives in the Casa Amarilla, or Yellow House, so called because of the color of the paint upon its exterior walls. It stands opposite the Plaza Bolivar, one of the handsomest little parks in the world, with a brown statue of the great Liberator in the centre, and broad walks that are thronged nightly with the belles and beaux of Caracas, who come out to hear the band play and enjoy flirtations. Opposite is the great cathedral, and, adjoining, the build-

ing in which are most of the offices of the government. The Casa Amarilla is a two-story structure of plainly stuccoed stone, surrounding a large court, or patio. It is furnished with some elegance, and the executive salon, in which ambassadors are received, and official ceremonies held, is very nearly as large as the East Room of the White House at Washington.

I first saw this room when the South American commission presented their letters of credence from President Arthur to President Crespo, and a description of that ceremony will convey an idea of the formality with which official transactions are attempted in most of the Spanish-American republics. When the President of the United States receives an ambassador from a foreign power there is considerably less ceremony. The ambassador is called for at his hotel by the secretary of state, who escorts him to the Blue Room at the White House. A messenger is then sent to summon the president, who comes down-stairs in his morning-coat, listens to the reading of an address by the ambassador, and makes a brief and complimentary reply. But our less populous neighbors enjoy more "ceremony." At eleven o'clock one morning we were waited upon at our hotel in Caracas by a gentleman in a gorgeous uniform, who bore the rank of official introducer of ambassadors. He conducted us to a gilded coach, which, with an escort of gayly caparisoned cavalry, was waiting at the door. We were then driven to the Casa Amarilla. At the entrance the minister of foreign affairs, in court costume, was waiting to receive us. We followed him up-stairs to an anteroom, where a couple of aides-de-camp were in attendance. Then a procession was formed, the minister of foreign affairs escorting the senior commissioner, the official introducer of ambassadors the second in rank, one aide-

de-camp, the resident United States minister, and another, the secretary of the commission. As the column was formed thus, by twos, the wide doors were thrown open by servants, and we saw at the end of the long room, on a low platform, President Crespo in the full uniform of a general, with wide yellow sash, seated upon a gilded throne with the coat-of-arms of Venezuela above him, and his cabinet, also in uniform, with similar sashes, sitting around their chief.

As the doors were opened we made a low bow, which was responded to by the group at the other end of the room. Then we marched slowly towards them. Half-way across the intervening space we stopped and made a second bow, to which the president and his cabinet responded and rose from their chairs. Then, having reached the foot of the throne, we made a third bow, and, after a few words of introduction from the United States minister, the senior commissioner read an address, conveying to the President of Venezuela expressions of profound friendship from the President of the United States, congratulations upon the peace and prosperity of the country, and earnest wishes for its continuance. President Crespo, in reply, read an address of welcome, which reciprocated the sentiments of the President of "La Grande Republica," as they call the United States, and expressed his desire to receive, at our pleasure and convenience, any further communications we might have to make. Then the commission made its best bow, the procession formed again and marched away. At the centre of the room we wheeled around, made another bow, and, having reached the doors, wheeled again and made a third.

Guzman Blanco, when he was president, did not occupy the Executive Mansion, because he had so many children, but had a much larger and more elegant residence in an-

other part of the city. Dr. Rojas-Paul and his successors, however, have lived there with their families, and occupied for their office a spacious room upon the second floor. There, with his private secretary, the President of Venezuela attends to his correspondence, receives his ministers and other officials and the public, who, however, unless they happen to be special friends, are required to make appointments with him in advance through the member of the cabinet who has charge of that branch of the government to which the business of the visitor relates. Thus, if one desires to see the president upon matters relating to the army, he must apply for an audience through the minister of war, and the latter informs his excellency concerning the facts, so that he may be able to discuss the subject intelligently with the visitor, which naturally saves a good deal of time.

There are days, however, when the public, irrespective of wealth, rank, or politics, are admitted to the president to submit petitions, and this is one of the most interesting features in Venezuelan official life. People who want offices or pensions, contracts or concessions or other favors at the hands of the president, and have been prevented from communicating with him, all come out early on that reception-day, and at least have the satisfaction of making their wishes known, even if he is not able to gratify them. There will be women seeking pardons for husbands, brothers, or sons who have been convicted of crime, or asking the release of some relative from the army. Complaints of injustice on the part of the police or the army or government officials are frequent. Even more delicate matters are called to the attention of the president, and his aid or interference asked. He is compelled to listen to the recital of matrimonial infelicities in a land where there is

no such thing as divorce, and maidens whose lovers are in the army or are fugitives from justice often call to secure his intercession. Of course there are many beggars, and the president, from his own slender purse, is able to extend much charity in cases of emergency, but he refers most of the appeals to the police for investigation.

Rojas-Paul was a man of benevolent disposition, and one of his first official acts was to order the establishment of a charity hospital of one thousand beds—something unknown at Caracas before. Nor was this his only act of philanthropy. Very soon after his inauguration he directed the secretary of the treasury to distribute his salary as president for the first year among the families of the soldiers composing the guard at the capital as a reward for their good behavior and fidelity to the government. He is also a religious man, a devout Catholic, and while president attended mass regularly at the cathedral, where he could be seen early every morning kneeling upon the damp and cold stone floor with servants and common soldiers, as well as people of distinction who are pious enough to observe their religious duties in that manner. It is not a common custom for business men or politicians to attend church, except upon feast or fast days. They usually permit their wives and daughters to monopolize the religion of the family. President Rojas-Paul did not allow himself to be attended by aides-de-camp or body-guards of soldiers, as is the custom of most of the South American presidents. He was a civil magistrate, and conducted his administration as a civilian, unlike most of his predecessors, who were military men.

The "fad" of Rojas-Paul, if I may use that term, was the education of young savages of the Goajira tribe of Indians, who inhabit the peninsula of that name, which

lies between Colombia and Venezuela. One of the customs of that nation of aborigines is to sell their children into bondage to their neighbors of Maracaibo and Rio Hacha, where they are always in demand, as they make excellent servants when properly trained. Dr. Rojas-Paul has always taken a great interest in them, having once made an exploration of their country, and a large number of the young men and maidens of the tribe have been educated and trained under the care of the Church at his expense, and under his own personal supervision.

Official receptions are held at the Capitol, or Palacio Federal—a fine building only a block distant, where there is an immense room especially adapted to entertaining. Although but one story in height, it is the handsomest and largest structure in Venezuela, and stands upon the former site of a famous old monastery, whose walls were staunch enough to sustain the shocks of the great earthquake that destroyed the city in 1812. The Palacio Federal covers an entire square, with a circular court in the centre that has a fine bronze fountain, several statues of marble, and many beautiful flowering plants. Around the court is a wide corridor with massive pillars, from which several rooms are entered, for there is no way to reach them from the street.

At one end of the building is a lofty elliptical-shaped room, 200 feet long and from 40 to 100 in width, without a pillar, where balls and receptions and other official ceremonies take place, and the Venezuelans are much given to that sort of thing. There is no finer ball-room in the world. The uncarpeted floor is laid in woods of different colors; but the walls and ceiling are a ghastly white, and the gilt furniture, upholstered in gorgeous brocades and satins, has a somewhat startling effect. It is always

arranged, according to the custom of the country, in rows along the walls.

This room is used as a national portrait gallery also, and contains a collection of about sixty pieces, as good as one often finds, and better than we have at Washington, representing men who have been notable in the history of the republic. At one end is a heroic portrait of Bolivar, and at the other one of Guzman Blanco, uniform in style and frame, who looks as grand and proud as if he had made the world. Guzman was strictly impartial in selecting subjects for this collection. Beside the portrait of the great Bolivar hangs that of Paez, who grew to greatness under the protection and encouragement of the Liberator, then overthrew him, and drove his patron, heart-broken and humiliated, into exile. Next comes the man who treated Paez as he had treated Bolivar, and sent him to die in exile in New York.

For seventy-five years Venezuela was a carnival of conspiracy and rebellion, and from Bolivar to Guzman Blanco power was held by force of arms, to be overcome as often as an insurrectionary army could be collected. But nearly every man who has been president, or has overturned a president, has his portrait in this collection, all standing as heroes for the admiration of the people—a group of Washingtons, Benedict Arnolds, Aaron Burrs, Lincolns, Grants, Davises, Lees, intermingled without the slightest regard to previous associations. Guzman was even so generous as to admit the portrait of a former subordinate who conspired against him and was shot for treason.

In one of the wings of the Palacio Federal sits the Supreme Court of the country; in another are the offices of the Interior and War departments; while at the opposite end of the building are the halls of the national legislature



—the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies—two lofty, barn-like-looking rooms, each about sixty feet square, and destitute of decoration, except the portraits of Bolivar and Guzman, which are seen everywhere. The members sit in ordinary cane-seated office-chairs, without desks or tables, the presiding officers being placed in little coops perched high upon the walls, with a shelf for the tribune on one side and another for the clerk on the other.

Opposite the Palacio Federal is the University of Caracas, a beautiful Gothic structure of white marble, and beyond that the Opera-house. On the other side of the square is the principal hotel.

The President of Venezuela is assisted in the performance of his duties by a cabinet of eight members—namely, a minister of the interior, a minister of foreign relations, a minister of public works, a minister of the treasury, a minister of public credit, a minister of progress, a minister of justice and education, and a minister of war and marine.

The president receives a salary of \$1000 a month, a house to live in, horses and carriages, servants and furniture, and, in fact, everything except his food. He conducts himself very much like the President of the United States, his daily routine is similar, and he is annoyed by office-seekers to about the same degree. He commences business at half-past six o'clock in the morning, and often has cabinet meetings as early as seven. The government offices open at seven, when all the clerks and officials are expected to be on hand, no matter how late they were dancing or dining the night before; but they knock off work at eleven for their breakfast and siesta, and do not return to their desks again until two.

Cabinet ministers are paid \$6000 a year, and congressmen \$2500, without any additional allowances; but the

sessions do not last more than three months usually, so that they may engage in their regular occupations the rest of the year.

The standing army is composed of five battalions of infantry, 1842 men; one battery of artillery, 301 men; and one regiment of cavalry, 325 strong. Besides these regulars, who garrison the capital and the several forts throughout the country, there is a federal militia system, drilled regularly, and required to respond to the call of the government at any time. There is no frontier to protect against the incursions of savages, for, although wild Indians can be found in the interior and along the branches of the Orinoco, they do not trouble the whites, and add their share to the products of the republic.

The government has established a school of industry for the education of Indian children, and every year a commission is sent to obtain recruits for the army among them. The boys are taught trades and all sorts of handicraft, as well as reading, writing, and arithmetic, and the girls are drilled in the duties of the home. When they have reached an age when their faculties are fully developed and their habits fixed, they are sent back among their tribes as missionaries, not to teach religion, but civilization; and the Indians are said to be improving rapidly under the tuition of their own daughters and sons.

The rank and file of the army is composed almost exclusively of Indians, negroes, and half-breeds. They receive pay to the amount of one franc per day, from which they must furnish their own subsistence. They are obedient, faithful, and good fighters. Some of the fiercest battles the world has ever known have taken place in Venezuela with these poor fellows on both sides. Their uniform in the field is a pair of cotton drawers, a cotton shirt, a cheap

straw hat, and a pair of sandals; but when they come to occupy the barracks in town, and do guard duty around the government buildings, they are made to wear red woolen trousers, blue coats, and caps of red and blue, with regular army shoes. There is a certain native grace of movement and posture about the muscular peons when their arms and limbs are not restrained, but "store clothes" do not fit them and look very uncomfortable.

The officers of the army are generally good-looking young fellows of the best families, who take readily to military service and enjoy it. They wear well-kept uniforms, have good manners, and are usually graduates of the University.

None of the Venezuelan money, neither gold nor silver—which is the circulating medium, for there are but two banks of issue with limited circulation—has any sign or inscription upon it by which its value may be detected. The ordinary silver piece, the standard of all value, is the bolivar. On this all computations are based, all interest reckoned, and all bills at the stores are made out. It has the same value as the French franc—twenty cents in our money. Going down the scale, the next is a real, which is half a bolivar, the medio, which is five cents, the quartillo, two and a half cents, and the centavo. Going up, there are coins representing two, two and a half, and five bolivars—the latter being called a peso fuerte, and worth 100 cents. Above that are gold coins representing four dollars and twenty dollars; but, as I have said, not one of them bears an inscription denoting its value, and those who handle them have to judge by their size.

There are two banks in the city of Caracas, one of which—"El Banco de Venezuela," with its branches in all parts of the republic—is to the government of Venezuela what

the Bank of England is to Great Britain—a place of deposit and a disbursing agent. All the collectors of public revenue make their deposits there regularly, and the bank has the use of the money until it is checked out to pay current expenses by the secretary of the treasury. This has not been so great an advantage, however, as might be imagined, for often in past years the government funds have been overdrawn and the bank has had to make advances. El Banco de Venezuela has a capital of 3,200,000 bolivars, or \$640,000, which is divided into only thirty-two shares. It is a bank of issue, and has notes out to the amount of half its paid-up capital, which is the limit fixed by law. Money is loaned on real estate or collaterals for from six to nine per cent., the former being the usual rate. Call loans are unknown. There has never been sufficient business in the country to require that sort of practice.

Taxes are light, and are assessed in a peculiar way. If a man owns a house which he leases to a neighbor, or a farm, or any other piece of real property, he has to pay for taxes a sum equal to one-half of a month's rent every year. If he lives in the house or operates the farm himself, the rate of taxation is governed by what it would rent for.

Most of the revenue of the government comes from customs dues, and everything that passes through the custom-house, both imports and exports, has to pay duty. Even passengers who go and come are taxed by being compelled to take out a permit for landing and departing. Duties are assessed by the pound, and not by the value of the articles imported. Lumber, coal, dry-goods, drugs, shoes, confectionery, bacon, and jewelry, as well as all other forms of imports, are classified into schedules, and each is taxed so much per pound, according to its specific gravity, as one might say.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE DOWNFALL OF GUZMAN BLANCO

At the expiration of his last term of office in 1888 General Guzman Blanco arranged for the election of Dr. Rojas-Paul as his successor, and departed with his family for Paris with a general commission as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to all the nations of Europe, intending as usual to direct the affairs of the government by mail and cable. He could not have chosen a more competent or popular substitute, for Dr. Rojas-Paul had the confidence and respect of the people and long experience in public affairs. But the Dictator had not been absent many months before he noticed signs of independence in his protégé and successor that were displeasing to a man of his autocratic disposition.

The new president adopted a policy of conciliation and toleration which contrasted strongly with "The Illustrious American's" methods, and it won the support and confidence of the business community and all patriotic citizens. Exiles returned home, political offenders were released from prison and recalled from banishment, the press was made free, and the military guards which had been kept constantly about the executive mansion for the protection of Guzman Blanco's person were withdrawn and sent to their barracks. Rojas-Paul announced himself "a civil president," in contradistinction to the long line of military

men who had filled his chair and governed the country by military methods. He selected as his advisers, too, citizens, not soldiers—representatives of the learned professions and the commercial interests of the country.

✓ Rojas-Paul pruned down the pay-roll, abolished the sinecures Guzman had arranged for his favorites, and sent them one after another away. Some of them went to Paris to complain and to receive the consolation of their chief, to which no attention was paid. The city and the country at large soon began to feel the effects of the policy, and fortunately for Rojas-Paul were unprecedentedly prosperous. ✓ The price of coffee, which is the staple in Venezuela, was higher than for a generation, and all other crops shared the increase in value as well as abundance. The government paid cash for everything, usually in advance, for there was a heavy and increasing balance in the treasury, something unknown before. Peculation and extravagance were stopped, and the officials discovered that it was expected of them to look after something besides their own personal interests.

All this was lucky for Rojas-Paul, and but for such a fortuitous combination of circumstances he might not have been able to sustain himself when the crisis came. There are two classes of men in Venezuela. One class make it their business to look after politics. The other make it their business to let politics alone. The latter class, who do not often care who is president, gave Rojas-Paul a solid, active, and sincere support, and with such backing he had the courage to adhere to his policy, regardless of Guzman's displeasure.

In the meantime the latter was in Paris, granting concessions in the most extravagant and reckless manner. Guzman was empowered to negotiate for the establishment

of colonies of immigrants in various sections of the republic; but in making concessions with immigration companies, he sold them the right to locate upon unoccupied private as well as public lands, which, of course, aroused indignation and active hostility. He granted a concession to a French syndicate to establish a banking system throughout Venezuela that would have ruined every local banker in the republic. He gave concessions for railways in all directions, pledging the government to all sorts of guarantees, and, in negotiating for the funding of the public debt, agreed that the interest upon bonds held in Venezuela should be reduced one per cent., while that upon bonds held by foreigners should be increased a similar amount. This was not calculated to make him popular with local capitalists nor with the officials of the government, for he consented that the entire revenues should be mortgaged to secure the concessions he had granted. There was an outcry at once, first in Caracas and then in Paris, for President Rojas-Paul declined to approve many of the concessions, and Congress sustained him in every instance.

It was the first time since 1870 that the Congress of Venezuela had refused to consent to or had even criticised an act of Guzman Blanco. It was the signal for every man who had a grudge—and the country is full of those who suffered from his tyranny during his reign of eighteen years—to throw stones at him. Editors who had been repressed by force or fear of the calabozo opened their batteries, and the chief entertainment of the people was to discuss the suppressed scandals of Guzman's reign.

In the midst of the excitement over the rebellion of the people against the Dictator occurred what is known as the Paez incident. General Paez, who was one of the heroes

*Ladies Literary Club*

of the war for independence, and for half a century a prominent figure in the affairs of the republic, was banished and died a broken-hearted exile in New York. The people of Venezuela desired that his remains should be brought home, and in 1888 the government of the United States furnished a man-of-war for that purpose. The body was buried in the national Pantheon, beside that of Simon Bolivar, with great ceremony, and a handsome monument was erected. All this was displeasing to Guzman Blanco, and he prepared a pamphlet in which the memory of Paez was assailed and the government and people denounced in bitter terms for paying honor to the bones of a traitor. Thousands of copies of this pamphlet were printed in Paris and sent to Caracas, where they were seized by the students of the university and burned in the plaza before the Pantheon. The leaders—a few young men aged from twenty to twenty-five, and belonging to the best families of the republic—were arrested for riot, and for a few days were imprisoned. But Guzman Blanco, when he heard of the affair, could scarcely restrain himself, and cabled President Rojas-Paul, demanding that they should be rearrested, tried by court-martial, and shot. That is what he would have done under similar circumstances, but the president declined to comply with the demand, on the ground of public policy.

A heated correspondence between the president and "The Illustrious American" followed, but, although the nature of the letters was well understood, their contents were never published. Then Guzman Blanco wrote to General Crespo, who was in Peru, saying that it was their duty to be friends, and make war against a common enemy. He suggested that he would furnish the means if Crespo would take the active leadership of a revolution for the



overthrow of Rojas-Paul, and invited him to come to Paris for consultation. Crespo did not reply to the letter, but sent a copy of it to the president.

Guzman Blanco's power always rested upon a well-organized army and commanders who were devoted to his interests. Rojas-Paul, fearing that they would betray him, began gradually to substitute men in whom he had confidence for the Dictator's friends, and soon made mutiny impossible. These changes also called out indignant remonstrances from Paris, and the mails were full of them when the 27th of April arrived. This was the anniversary of the capture of Caracas, and the commencement of Guzman Blanco's reign. It had always been customary to celebrate it as a national holiday, with military parades, orations eulogistic of "The Illustrious American," and the decoration of the statues he had erected in his own honor.

The government made the usual preparations for the celebration, although the newspapers were full of protests and the students declared that the statues should not be decorated even if it cost them their lives. When morning came the streets were filled with an excited populace; the saloons were all closed as a precaution, and the soldiers, instead of parading in column, were directed to patrol the streets to prevent riots. An attempt was made to decorate the statues, but the students tore the wreathes in fragments and threw stones at the bronze images. Processions of citizens marched the streets shouting, "Down with the Dictator!" "Death to the Tyrant, Traitor, and Thief!" and the walls of the houses were inscribed with similar sentiments. The entire military force in Caracas was required to protect the statues from the mob, which would have torn them down. Day and night, for weeks, the two statues of "The Illustrious American," who called himself "The Regenerator of

Venezuela," and his residence were surrounded by companies of soldiers.

Guzman Blanco was informed of these proceedings by cable, and the wrath of the autocrat may be imagined. He sent many insulting messages to President Rojas-Paul, who endeavored in vain to pacify him. On the 16th of May the mail-steamer from France arrived at La Guayra, bringing letters from Paris to the president and several other leading men of the country. Their contents were unknown, but may be inferred from the fact that on the following day Rojas-Paul tendered to Congress his resignation.

As soon as the fact became known about the city—and the news was on every tongue in a very few minutes—every place of business was closed, and the Capitol was besieged by 20,000 people, crazy with excitement, demanding that the resignation should not be accepted. The Congress was forced to abandon its session. Mass meetings were held in the plazas and the streets, which were addressed by popular orators, and all uttered the same sentiments. Everybody believed that the president had resigned in compliance with the demands of the Dictator in Paris, and demanded that the resignation be withdrawn. The executive mansion was surrounded all day by thousands of people calling for Rojas-Paul, but the great doors were closed and protected by a regiment of soldiers, and the blinds were closely drawn.

There is a statue of George Washington in the southern part of the city, standing in the midst of a beautiful park. Around it, as if by common consent, the populace gathered in the evening, and almost every man in Caracas was there. Addresses were delivered and a resolution was passed, declaring that the meeting adjourn to the Plaza Bolivar, on

which the president lives, and there make a formal demand for the withdrawal of his resignation. He was notified of what had happened, and when the crowd reached his house was standing on the balcony to receive them. The man who had presided at the Plaza Washington meeting made a brief speech, and the president replied.

He said he was profoundly moved by the manifestations of the people, which he assumed were intended as an expression of confidence and an approval of the policy of his administration. He had endeavored to perform his duties without fear or favor, and had been actuated only by a conscientious desire to promote the public welfare. He had considered his duty to his country higher than his obligation to any individual (referring to Guzman Blanco), and if he had failed or faltered or offended it was due to an error of judgment rather than to malice or intention. If his administration had not been satisfactory he was willing to lay down the honors and responsibilities that had come to him unsought, and surrender them to a better and wiser man. His resignation, he said, had been tendered to Congress in order that the representatives of the people might pass judgment upon his official acts and policy; but if it were the popular wish, he would withdraw it and continue in the performance of his official duties.

The next day the Congress passed a resolution expressing complete confidence in the president and its approval of his policy, returned him his letter of resignation unaccepted, and adjourned *sine die*, leaving much important business unfinished. Then the people gave up the day to rejoicings and congratulations. Business was entirely suspended, all the shops were closed, and there was a flag floating from almost every building in the town. The crowds in the streets were orderly, but occasionally some one would be heard to

shout, "*Muerte al Guzman Blanco!*" or "*Vive la Libertad!*" or "*Vive el Presidente Rojas-Paul!*"

Three members of the cabinet known to be partisans of Guzman tendered their resignations on the following day, which were accepted at once, and the appointment of anti-Guzman leaders were announced in the evening papers. The general understanding on the part of the people was that the president had cut himself entirely loose from the Dictator, that the divorce was absolute and permanent; while, on the other hand, the president was assured that, whatever means of revenge or resistance Guzman might adopt, he would receive the support of the people.

As soon as the events in Caracas became known throughout the country and the business men of the capital took pains to inform their customers and agents of their effect and significance, there was a general uprising. Guzman Blanco was repudiated and Rojas-Paul was endorsed everywhere. In some places there were public demonstrations. In La Guayra there was a riot in which several men were killed and more injured. In Valencia, the second city in population and importance, there was a dignified and orderly expression of the popular will that the reign of the Dictator had ended, and that a government of the people had come and must continue. The president received addresses signed by thousands of citizens from all parts of the republic, as the custom is, manifesting their love and loyalty, and the governors of nearly all the states came to the capital personally to give similar assurances. The official paper contained the following announcement at the head of its columns:

#### EXPRESIÓN DE GRATITUD.

El Presidente de la República agradece en alto grado y del modo más sincero, las numerosas felicitaciones y expresivos votos de ad-

hesión que ha recibido y continúa recibiendo, tanto de corporaciones y empleados oficiales, como de distintos gremios y de ciudadanos particulares, no sólo del Distrito Federal, sino de los demás puntos de la República, con motivo del retiro de su renuncia y del cumplimiento del programa de política nacional que ha venido desarrollando durante su Administración; y siente sobre manera no poderlos contestar concreta é individualmente, por impedírsele el despacho de las arduas tareas administrativas.

A todos presenta la expresión ingenua de su inmensa gratitud.

[*Translation.*—The president of the republic begs to acknowledge in the highest degree and the most sincere manner the numerous felicitations and expressive vows of loyalty which he has received and continues to receive from all of the corporations, professions, and tradesmen, as well as from organized bodies of particular citizens, not alone of the federal district, but of all other points of the republic, desiring that he should recall his resignation, and complimenting the programme of national politics which has been unfolded during his administration. He regrets that he is unable to answer concretely and individually all of them, but is prevented from doing so by his arduous administrative tasks.

To all he presents an ingenuous expression of his immense gratitude.]

The custom had been for many years to celebrate the 13th of June as a national holiday in honor of Guzman Blanco, for that is the anniversary of Saint Anthony, his patron and protector, for whom he was named. It gave the people an opportunity to sing his praises, pronounce eulogies upon his character and achievements, read poetic tributes to his greatness, and decorate his statues—all of which was very pleasing to him. Although the attempt to celebrate the 27th of April ended in a riot, it was proposed to carry out the usual programme on Saint Anthony's Day, just as if Guzman Blanco was on good terms with the government, and Dr. Fernando Aivillo, an adherent of the Dictator, who had been secretary of the interior for several years, issued a proclamation to the governors of the several

states to that effect. To the usual formula he added a clause directing the use of the police and the army, if necessary, to prevent any interruption of the ceremonies and all unseemly demonstrations. The Governor of Caracas promulgated the order with an announcement that it would be strictly enforced.

This was equal to shaking a red blanket in the face of an infuriated bull. The newspapers of Caracas and other cities, which for the first time in a quarter of a century were allowed to print what they pleased, burst out in the most indignant manner, declaring that Venezuela was done with Guzman Blanco; that the celebration of his saint's day was not desired by the people and would not be permitted. The spirit of rebellion, which is one of the chief characteristics of the people, was thoroughly inflamed again as it was on the 27th of April, and President Rojas-Paul revoked the decree of his minister.

The latter at once resigned, and Dr. Anduesa Palacio, who had been minister of public instruction, an anti-Guzman man, was promoted to fill the vacancy. General Silva Gondolphi, the Governor of Caracas, also resigned, and Santos Matte was appointed to his place. A new decree was issued, announcing the abandonment of the proposed official ceremonies and declaring it to be the privilege of the people to celebrate the occasion in any manner they pleased, provided there was no violation of law and no attempt to injure public or private property. In other words, the enemies of General Guzman Blanco were given full license to indulge in manifestations of hostility, provided they did not attempt to pull down his statues or disfigure his house. This proclamation restored peace and quiet and re-established the administration in the good opinion of the public, but it was a complete repudiation of

Guzman Blanco's influence by the government he had controlled so long.

The day passed without any demonstration whatever. There was a solemn quietude about the capital, the silence of apprehension. No attempt was made by the adherents of the dethroned Dictator to glorify him, for the temper of the people was fully understood by them; and when the president's last proclamation was issued there was a stampede of the leaders of the "Guzmancista," or Guzman party, from Caracas. Many of them sailed for Paris, and others retired to their haciendas in the country to avoid publicity. Nor did the opposition manifest any disposition to create a disturbance. They were satisfied with the situation and willing to let the anniversary pass unobserved. The guards around the statues and the residence of the Dictator were strengthened as a precaution, and the military forces were under arms at their barracks prepared to quell any unlawful uprising. The mercantile houses remained open all day as usual, but very little business was done, and most of the time was spent in gossiping about the situation. There was an apparent anxiety on all sides lest trouble might occur, which was in itself a sufficient safeguard.

The president attempted to renew communication with Guzman Blanco, and reconcile him to the situation. About the middle of May he sent a confidential agent to Paris, where Guzman still remained as a diplomatic representative of the government, with instructions to make an explanation of the causes and consequences of the recent demonstrations of hostility and of the policy of the administration in regard to them. But the indignant Dictator refused to see the ambassador of peace, and declined to receive any communication from him. The latter at once cabled

the news of the failure of his mission, and warned the president that Guzman had already sent men to Venezuela to create a revolution.

✓ The warning came none too soon. The leader of the movement, General Quevado, who was one of Guzman's chief lieutenants for several years, was arrested upon his arrival and shipped back to Paris by the first steamer. His companion was shot in resisting arrest.

The dethroned Dictator made repeated attempts to inaugurate a revolution during the following summer, and at one time it was reported that he had left Paris for Venezuela to lead a movement in person; but his adherents advised him of the temper of the people, and he wisely kept away. He still continued to keep his commission as minister plenipotentiary, and one of his duties was to arrange with Great Britain a settlement of the boundary dispute which has since become the cause of grave concern. In the performance of this mission he spent several months in London during the summer of 1889. There came to Caracas mysterious rumors of treachery. It was soon after freely asserted, and published in the Venezuelan newspapers that he had made an attempt to betray his country, and waive } the claims of his government to the disputed territory west } of the Essequibo River as far as the so-called Schomburgk } line, provided Great Britain would arrange a compromise } with the English holders of certain Venezuela bonds.

✓ No positive proof of such a proposition was ever disclosed, so far as the public is aware, but the evidence was sufficient to induce Anduesa Palacio, then president, to revoke Guzman's powers as plenipotentiary, and to send him a cablegram in which he was denounced as a traitor to his country, and compared to Coriolanus, the general who betrayed Rome. Guzman replied with an indignant denial



of the charges, and published a pamphlet, which he sent to Venezuela for distribution, reciting his proceedings and defending his course. Dr. Saluzzo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, answered him in another pamphlet, which was, however, anonymous, renewing the accusations, and presenting some circumstantial evidence of treachery, but no direct proof.

It is generally believed that Guzman attempted to negotiate a treaty with Great Britain which included commercial concessions, a settlement of the boundary controversy, an adjustment of the public debt, and the titles to certain mining properties that were and still are in dispute; but the facts are known only to himself and the officials of the Foreign Office in London.

Nevertheless, the publication of the rumors and the action of the president caused the greatest excitement in Venezuela, and completely destroyed all influence Guzman had retained in the country up to that time. If he had returned to Caracas, or had attempted to land at any part of the republic, he would have been hanged by a mob, and it would not be safe for him to visit Venezuela to-day, so embittered are the people against him.

The indignant populace, not being able to reach the man with their vengeance, took partial satisfaction in destroying his monuments and plundering his property, which up to that time had been protected by the police. During the night of Saturday, October 26th, 1889, the students of the University marched to the narrow plaza between the Capitol and the University where his equestrian statue stood, sawed the bronze legs of the horse close to the hoofs, and then, throwing a rope over the head of the general, dragged the effigy from its pedestal. It fell with a crash upon the pavement, and within a few moments was hacked and beaten into a shapeless mass of bronze. The head, which had be-

come detached from the body, was hoisted upon a pole and carried like a banner before a procession to El Calvario, a beautiful park in the suburbs of the city, in which another statue of the Dictator stood. That was also demolished in a similar manner.

The procession was then reformed, proceeded to the residence of General Crespo, who had been roused from sleep, and presented him with the battered head of his enemy. At the unwelcome offering Crespo shrank with horror, like Cæsar from the head of Pompey. The rest of the night was spent by the students tearing from other statues and public buildings the tablets which bore Guzman Blanco's detested name. Even the statue of his father, Antonio Guzman, was removed from its pedestal, dragged through the streets, and thrown into the river, but has since been repaired and restored by the government. Several portraits of the ex-Dictator—some of them expensive and artistic works in oil—were taken from the public offices and destroyed, and when morning dawned not a single statue, monument, or inscription remained to remind Caracas of his existence.

The city was thoroughly aroused by the shouts of the students, and the mob rapidly increased to thousands, including many desperate and worthless characters, who completed the indignity and destruction by breaking into Guzman's unoccupied residence, looting it of everything that was valuable, and destroying what they did not wish to carry away. During the early morning hours an attack was also made upon his country-place at Antimino, a few miles from Caracas, but that was saved by a company of soldiers that occupied barracks near by. Fragments of his shattered monuments, bits of furniture and bric-à-brac from his mansion, and other mementos of the mob's work

were afterwards openly sold in the shops and markets, and were peddled in the streets. ✓

That the demonstration was approved, or at least permitted, by the government was apparent from the fact that the police of Caracas, who are usually alert to suppress every symptom of disorder, stood idly by and witnessed the pillage and destruction without offering to interfere, although a few months before they fought desperately against a similar mob organized for a similar purpose. A battalion of 900 soldiers lay sleeping in their barracks throughout the entire disturbance, half of them not more than three blocks distant from one of the statues destroyed, and their officers mingled freely with the mob. It was alleged that some of them assisted in the disorder. The chief of police spent the night at headquarters, where the shouts must have been audible, and received frequent reports from detectives and patrolmen as to the progress of the mob, evidently with the intention to interfere in case other property than Guzman's was attacked. No official report was ever made concerning this, the most general and significant demonstration that ever occurred in Caracas. I am advised that the records of the police department, which are usually voluminous, and cover every accident and act of disorder, do not contain the slightest reference to the events of October 26th, 1889. }

No arrests were made. No inquiry was instituted. ✓ President Rojas-Paul printed a curious sort of indirect apology and admonition in the official gazette a few days later, in which he deprecated "public demonstrations intended to excite indignation and gratify animosity," although he said, "where the judgment of the people is pronounced it is the duty of the government to accept it in silence." ✓ The leaders of the mob were well known. Their names

and their conduct were discussed at every dinner-table and at every public resort in Caracas, although the newspapers were scrupulous in omitting them. They were the sons of the best families in the republic. The fathers of some of them had suffered from Guzman's tyranny, and they enjoyed their revenge.

That the demonstration was premeditated is manifest, because on the same night similar mobs attacked the statues of Guzman Blanco in La Guayra, Valencia, Puerto Cabello, and Ciudad Bolivar, and destroyed them in a similar manner; and his beautiful plantation called "Guayavita," a few miles from the city of Valencia, was plundered. Not only was a handsome villa demolished, but thousands of productive coffee-trees were stripped of fruit and branches.

The government completed the work of the iconoclasts by rechristening everything that bore Guzman Blanco's name. The state that was once called in his honor is now known as Miranda. Parks, hospitals, railways, theatres, fortresses, streets, boulevards, mountains, rivers, are no longer known as Guzman Blanco's, but everything that can remind the public of his existence has been erased from the records and the map.

## CHAPTER XII

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PEOPLE

THE people of Venezuela are very musical. ✓ There are operatic performances at the Theatre Municipal, formerly the Theatre Guzman Blanco, at least twice a week the whole year round, sometimes by local performers and often by an imported company induced to visit Caracas under a subsidy from the government which usually spends \$40,000 annually to sustain public amusements. There is another theatre, a private enterprise, offering second-class entertainments.

The Theatre Municipal was erected at government expense by the Dictator, in whose honor it was originally named, and is one of the finest buildings in Caracas. It stands two blocks distant from the Capitol, has the form of an ellipse, and is capable of accommodating 2500 people. The parquet, or pit, has seats like those of the theatres in the United States, but is occupied only by men. No woman ever sits there. Around it, upon the ground-floor, is a dress-circle, with ordinary seats, which is the fashionable place for ladies, and there are three galleries divided into commodious boxes, seating four, six, and eight people. Above them, under the roof, is a balcony for the peanut gods, who take as animated an interest in the drama at Caracas as they do in Chicago or New York. The regular price of admission with a reserved seat, except in the

upper gallery, is one dollar, and the boxes are six, seven and a half, and ten dollars, according to their size and location. In the first gallery, opposite the stage, is a large box capable of holding fifteen or twenty persons, which is always reserved for the president and his family, who are constant attendants, and usually have a party with them.

Persons who are to occupy boxes go in evening dress, but this rule does not apply to the seats in the dress-circle or parquet. On the second and third floors are spacious and handsomely decorated foyers, where the people promenade during the long waits between the acts, and are served with *helados*, *dulces*, wines, *coñac*, and other refreshments. The performances are long, commencing at half-past eight o'clock, and continuing until midnight and sometimes until one or two o'clock in the morning.

There is a good deal of native artistic talent in Venezuela, both in the composition and in the execution of music. Original operas are frequently given, and original songs and instrumental compositions are published in large numbers. There are several conservatories of music, and in nearly every house is a piano, which is used abundantly, as any one who has tramped the streets can testify. The residence quarter of the city, at all hours of the day, except those devoted to the siesta, reminds you of the corridors of a ladies' seminary, for through the open windows of nearly every house come unmistakable sounds of diligent and energetic practising.

On Thursday and Sunday nights the national band attached to the headquarters of the army plays in the Plaza Bolivar from half-past eight until eleven o'clock, and draws a crowd of citizens who promenade the brilliantly lighted walks or sit in circles chatting. Old women are there with chairs that can be hired for a few coppers, and shrill-voiced

boys peddle beer, iced drinks, helados, confectionery, and other refreshments between the numbers. Here on these *buenos noches*, as they are called, the fashionable people gather in full force, the old to gossip and the young to flirt.

Another place of resort which is largely patronized, El Puente Hierro, being the terminus of one of the fashionable drives of the city, is on the banks of the Rio Guiare, at the base of the mountains that close in the valley of Caracas from the south. Here is an iron bridge "erected under the administration of the Illustrious American, General Antonio Guzman Blanco," a procession of stately palms, a suburban railway station, a grove of mango-trees, several more or less reputable drinking-places, and a lot of catch-penny shows. Every afternoon from five to seven there is a considerable crowd, coming and going in carriages and on horseback, but on Saturday evenings as late as midnight, when a military band furnishes music, there is a large assembly of the lower and middle classes, who engage in games, eat, drink, and are merry. The ladies of the aristocracy sit in their carriages about the grove and watch the scenes, which are always amusing and often hilarious, while the men folks, particularly the young chaps, mingle with the throng and have flirtations with the girls of the lower caste, and there are some very pretty ones.

Caracas is a sort of one-story Paris. The shops are all Parisian, and sample bonnets and costumes are coming over by every steamer. All the dress-makers are French, and most of the shops at which wearing-apparel is sold are kept by Frenchmen, who, of course, buy their goods at home. It is no uncommon thing to find every lady around the table at a dinner-party wearing an imported costume, and when they go out to drive those who can afford it aspire to wear a Paris bonnet, like their sisters

and cousins and aunts in latitudes farther north. But no one ever goes to church to see new dresses and new bonnets. When they go to mass in the morning, as most of them do, the Caracas ladies usually wear plain black dresses, with a black or a white lace scarf over their heads. Some of the old-fashioned matrons wear simply a black shawl as a substitute for the Spanish mantilla.

The windows of the houses are broad and deep, for the walls are two and often three feet thick, and protected by iron gratings or cages which project six or eight inches over the sidewalk, about breast-high to a man standing outside. Within, the window-sills are cushioned, and every afternoon the ladies of the household, particularly the young and pretty ones, sit there, chatting with such passers-by as they happen to know. On a pleasant afternoon, if you will stroll up the fashionable residence streets, you will find every window occupied by one or more ladies arrayed in their most attractive costumes, and a good deal of love-making and courting is carried on in this way. Young Salvador, when his duties at the office or the store are over, invariably takes a route homeward that will bring him past the residence of his sweetheart Trinidad, and enjoys a chat with her, and a pressure of her hand through the iron bars.

The principal dress-making establishment in town has a sign that attracts attention, being a mixture of English, French, and Spanish :

“ High Life Parisien Salon para Modes y Confections.”

There is another shop, a variety store, nearly opposite, called “ El Arc de Noe ” (Noah’s Ark). It is a custom to give fancy names to stores and factories as well as to plantations and country residences. There is one called “ The



Rose of Sharon," but I was not able to find a Lily of the Valley. "La Esmeralda" is an attractive shopping-place. "The Fountain of Gladness" and "The Grace of God" are signs I saw over *pulperias*, or drinking-saloons; "The Pearl of Venezuela" and "The Pearl of the Continent" are well-known resorts; and I once saw a grocery called "Mo me olvides" (Forget-me-not).

It is a common thing to christen children after the Saviour and the saints. They are usually given the names of those whose anniversaries are nearest the day of their birth, and every boy born in the neighborhood of Christmas Day is called Jesus. Sometimes he is Jesu Christo, or Jesu Maria, or Jesu Salvador (Saviour). Crucero (cross) is a name often given to boys born on Good Friday, while Salvador is very common. It does not sound so blasphemous in Spanish, but it would scarcely be allowable in the United States for a woman to poke her head out of a door and yell "Jesus Saviour!" when she wants a servant, just as she would call for John Henry or Bridget. The girls are named after events in the lives of the Blessed Virgin and the saints—Concepcion, Annunciacion, Asuncion, Trinidad, and so on.

Every child has a godfather, called a "Padrino," and a godmother, called a "Madrina," who are expected to fulfil literally the vows made at the baptismal font, and usually do so. And in return there is a reverential feeling among the young towards their sponsors. When a father dies the godfather of his children is usually selected as their guardian, and when a young man or a young lady is in trouble they are quite as apt to consult and confide in their godfather and godmother as their natural parents. And the Padrino is not only expected to look after the spiritual welfare of his godchild, but its temporal welfare also. Rich men and prominent politicians are therefore much sought

after by their ambitious and impecunious friends ; but they usually limit their favors to relatives and persons for whom they feel an especial interest.

While the color line is not entirely obliterated in Venezuela society, it is not so strictly drawn as in the United States, and the fact that a man has negro blood in his veins does not debar him from either social, professional, or political honors. General Joaquin Crespo, president of the republic, and his wife are of mixed Spanish and Indian blood, and she is a very intelligent and estimable woman, by-the-way. And the amalgamation of races is not unusual among the lower classes. It is a common thing to see a white woman with an octoroon, or even a mulatto, for a husband, and even more common to see a white husband with a tinted Venus for a wife. At public balls, at the hotels, and other places of resort, in political, commercial, and social gatherings, the three races—Spanish, Indian, and Negro—and the mixed bloods, mingle without distinction. It is an ordinary sight to find black and white faces side by side at the dining-tables of the hotels and restaurants, and in the schools and colleges the color of a child makes no difference in his standing or treatment. Some of the most accomplished scholars in the country, some of the most eminent lawyers and jurists, are of negro blood ; and in the clergy no race distinction is recognized. I have seen a colored theological student—and one can always be detected by the long, black frock and shovel-hat he wears—walking arm in arm with a white comrade, and in the assignment of priests among the parishes the bishop never thinks of race prejudice. The present bishop is reputed to have both  
↓ Indian and negro blood in his veins. A Sunday morning I dropped in upon a congregation of worshippers in one of the fashionable churches, and found a negro priest singing

mass. I could not distinguish a single colored person in the congregation, and all the attending acolytes were white. Some of the wealthiest planters in the country are full-blooded negroes, but they are not often found in trade. This is probably because most of the merchants are foreigners. The natives are commonly engaged in agriculture and the professions.

The Venezuelans anticipated us by more than ten years in the emancipation of their slaves, and if Simon Bolivar had been permitted to rule over the country slavery would have been abolished soon after the war of independence. He was an abolitionist in practice as well as in theory, for when, after the independence of Peru, he was presented with a million dollars as a testimonial from the citizens of that republic, he showed how truly great he was by using it to purchase the liberty of a thousand slaves, and in a famous message to the people of Colombia said :

“There must be no caste on this continent. There is no blood less noble than other blood. All is the same in the sight of God. All are heroes who enter the camps of the battalions of liberty, and all are equally entitled to the just recompense of valor, of honor, of intelligence, of sacrifice, and of virtue.”

The decree of emancipation was issued on the 24th of March, 1854, by President Jose Gregorio Monagas, and the equal rights of all were at the same time declared. But by the strange irony of fate the man who conferred this boon of liberty upon several hundred thousand bondmen spent the last months of his life in a dungeon—a political prisoner. General Guzman Blanco, who embellished the city of Caracas with statues of all the famous men in the history of the republic—except General Paez, whom he has never forgiven for sentencing his father, Antonio Guzman,

to death—erected one, a bronze figure upon a granite pedestal, to the memory of the Emancipator. It stands in the plaza before the Church of the Candaleria, and in the inscription all reference to the actual fate of this friend of liberty is carefully avoided, for it reads:

El General  
JOSE GREGORIO MONAGAS  
Liberador de los en slavos en  
Venezuela.

Born in Maturin 1795; died in Maracaibo 1858.

His remains were translated to Caracas and deposited in the Pantheon.

The Illustrious American  
General Antonio Guzman Blanco  
erected this monument.

This was Guzman's way. In honoring others he honored himself, literally. He permitted no inference; he allowed no one to ask "Who raised this statue, or placed this monument here?" Wherever he made an improvement, be it even a bridge or an iron fence or a lamp-post, there was an announcement telling when and by whom it was done, and upon all the numerous monuments he erected in the city to commemorate notable events or perpetuate the memory of notable men the name of "The Illustrious American" appears in letters of the largest size used in the inscription. All the churches and public buildings that were erected or repaired are inscribed in a similar manner, and there was not a visible result of his enterprise or his expenditure of the public money that did not bear testimony thereof on a marble tablet.

A monument to General Falcon, who held his authority for several years by mere force of arms, with the assistance of General Guzman Blanco, stands in the plaza before the Church of the Blessed Lady of Mercy. He, like most

of the famous men of the republic, died abroad, at the town Fort-of-France, in the island of Martinique, in 1870, the year Guzman came into power. The latter had his remains brought to Caracas and buried in the Pantheon two years later, when this statue was raised in his honor, and like all others it bears testimony to its origin, for the inscription reads:

The Illustrious American,  
GENERAL ANTONIO GUZMAN BLANCO,  
President of the Republic,  
Erected this monument to  
FALCON,  
The Great Citizen Marshal,  
Founder of the Federation.

Returning again to the negroes, it may be said that they possess a greater intelligence, industry, and ambition, a higher degree of education, and a better social and commercial position than the natives of Indian descent. The latter appear to be doomed to perpetual peonage. While the laws of peonage have never existed in Venezuela, the relation between the planter and his laborers, particularly in the interior of the country, is equivalent to this form of slavery, and it is tolerated by both classes as the natural consequence of the difference in their wealth and social position. There are several distinct classes, or castes, in the population. First, the aboriginal Indians; then the whites, or creoles, the descendants of the early Spanish families; next the mestizoes, who are the result of contact between the Spaniards, or creoles, and the aboriginal Indians; next the negroes, who were brought from Africa as slaves, or came voluntarily from the islands of the West Indies; then the mulattoes, the mixture of negro and creole blood; and finally the zambos, the offspring of the im-

ported negro and the native Indian stock. The full-blooded negro, like the full-blooded Indian, seldom rises above the level of the laborer, and the zambo is the lowest of them all; but the half-whites possess the intelligence and the ambition of their Spanish fathers, attain wealth, social position, and political influence. The army, like the laboring classes, is composed of Indians, negroes, and zambos, while the officers are either white or have white blood in their veins.

It is not considered a disgrace to have mixed blood in your veins, nor to be the offspring of an illegal union. The number of illegitimate children in the country is astounding, and is due to two causes: First, the excessive fees that until recently were charged by the priests for performing the marriage ceremony, which made it impossible for a poor man, a peasant, to take a lawful wife. This evil has been partially corrected by the establishment of the civil rite of marriage, for which a fee of fifty cents only is charged, and the number of illegitimate births has been very largely reduced, although in three years, according to the official census, the number of legitimate births in Caracas was 3848, while the number of illegitimate was 3753, not quite one-half of the whole. In the country districts the proportion of illegitimate children is even greater. \* Second, among the middle and upper classes the custom of keeping mistresses of a lower caste is almost universal, and is not even a cause for gossip. It is the expected and natural thing not only for a bachelor to have a mistress and a family of children, but married men who can afford it usually maintain two establishments, and the occupants of both appear to have knowledge of each other.

→ The laboring classes, the negroes, Indians, and zambos, are honest, obedient, industrious, and good-humored, but

they are not as energetic as men of equal strength in the temperate zones, and do not accomplish more than one-third as much in the same amount of time. The climate is enervating, and they are averse both to hard labor and to the use of time-saving and labor-saving implements. Nor are they ingenious in their methods. They insist upon doing everything in the most difficult and clumsy way.

I stood one morning and watched a party of peons moving a large water or sewer pipe. It had been brought from some warehouse to this point on the street upon the back of a donkey, and, being insecurely fastened, had fallen off not more than two-thirds of a block from its destination. An Irishman or a Yankee would have rolled it down the road to the place where it was needed, but half a dozen men were called from the ditch they were digging to assist in strapping it upon that donkey's back again. The operation absorbed the entire attention of half a dozen men for twenty or twenty-five minutes. Then the donkey was driven along a few rods and the pipe unloaded again.

## CHAPTER XIII

### SOCIETY IN CARACAS

STRANGERS are always received with the greatest courtesy in Venezuela, and those who bring letters of introduction find no trouble in securing a warm welcome to the homes of the best people. But one without letters will find it difficult to enter society, because of the number of adventurers that go to Venezuela, as well as to other countries in South America, not only from the United States, but from all parts of the world. There is a prevailing impression that the South American republics are populated with a half-civilized race of people, and men who have lost caste at home go there to recoup; but they soon find that it is a mistake to do so. There are no cities in the world where the character and the conduct of a stranger, his costume and his manners, are scrutinized and criticised more severely than in Caracas, and before admitting one to the sanctity of his home a Caraquanian wants to know all about him.

And it is so to a certain extent in business matters. The merchants will of course sell to any customer who calls, but they will not buy from one they do not know. He will be treated courteously enough, and will hear all sorts of polite expressions, but they do not mean anything. Nearly every man you meet will present you with his house and all the remainder of his property, but it is sim-



ply a conventional form of politeness. If an entire stranger should call at the residence of a business man without a letter of introduction he would, in nine cases out of ten, be asked to repeat his visit at the office the next day, and be sent off without any further satisfaction.

But, as I have said, if a stranger comes properly introduced, he is overwhelmed with genuine hospitality, and made to feel at home not only at the residence and at the club of the gentleman to whom he is introduced, but among all his friends. A letter of introduction means more in Spanish America than it does in the United States. It is a certificate of good character and social standing, an assurance that the bearer is worthy of confidence, and a draft upon the hospitality of him to whom it is addressed.

The old families of the republic, those of Spanish descent, are severe in their notions of propriety, and insist upon the observance of forms and ceremonies. They would sooner die than violate the laws of etiquette, and they expect the same conscientiousness from others. They are largely intermarried, too, and prejudice as well as preference spreads rapidly. A sort of social freemasonry exists among them, and the recognition of a stranger by one family is certain to win for him the confidence and attention of all its connections and acquaintances.

Very few of the old families are involved in politics. They confine their attention to agriculture, to their coffee and sugar and cocoa plantations, and sometimes to trade. They seek the learned professions also, but are usually careful to keep their political convictions to themselves, and avoid commenting upon the actions of the government. Politics is a distinct occupation, and it is either very profitable or unprofitable. One of the chief objects of the revolutionary leaders in the past has been to get hold of

the treasury for the purpose of plundering it for the benefit of themselves and their adherents. The president has absolute control of the finances. He can make contracts for useful or for useless purposes at will, and by writing an order on the treasury can at any time draw out all the money in the vaults. Of course his concessions are nominally approved by Congress and his expenditures are reported in the budget, but they are explained in a plausible way, and critics understand that it is not considered good policy to look too closely into the whys and wherefores of the acts of the executive.

✓ When a political leader comes into power he appoints his adherents to the prominent offices at Caracas, makes them governors of states and collectors of customs, and when the offices are all given out grants them concessions for one thing and another by which they are enabled to make a competence. And these subordinates, understanding that they can hold office only a few years, and are likely to be thrown out by a *pronunciamento* at any time, make hay while the sun shines, and get rich as rapidly as they can without regard to means or methods. This accounts for the petty little exactions that are imposed upon vessels and shippers at the ports, as the fines and penalties collected are the perquisites of the officials. But there has been a great improvement in Venezuela in this respect in recent years.

But some queer things were done in the old times. A contract was once let for laying cement sidewalks all over the city at the expense of the government. General Guzman Blanco, who was then president, gave as a concession to his brother-in-law the exclusive right of importing cement, which is not produced in the country. This favored relative was the only person from whom it could be pur-

chased, and the government had to pay him whatever price he chose to charge. Therefore every barrel of cement that was used in laying the sidewalks brought a profit of five or six dollars into his pocket, and made him rich.

At another time Guzman granted to a friend and favorite the exclusive privilege of carrying merchandise to and from the custom-houses. Every package imported had to be opened and examined at the custom-houses, and not on the docks, as had previously been done, and no importer was allowed to handle his own goods. They must be carted from the docks to the custom-house, and then, after examination, delivered at their destination by Guzman's friend, and he was permitted to regulate his own charges. Of course this tax ultimately came out of the pockets of the public in the increased cost of the merchandise, but it was as good as a gold mine to the man who collected it, and he had no occasion for personal exertion, as he sublet the business in the several towns of the republic and sat down in Caracas to enjoy himself.

On the side of the hill El Calvario stands a yellow church, far away from everything else, and almost inaccessible. Every one utters an exclamation of surprise when he first sees it, and inquires why a church was ever erected in such a place. This is the story: When General Crespo was an ordinary citizen, but possessed of the ordinary ambition, his pious wife made a vow that if he was ever elevated to the presidency she would erect a handsome chapel in honor of her patron saint, the Blessed Virgin of Lourdes. It was rather more by the favor of Guzman Blanco than through the intercession of the saint that Crespo finally reached that exalted office, but his good wife determined to carry out the vow. Here the husband interfered, and determined that the work should be done at

the expense of the government, inasmuch as the people at large, the tax-payers, received quite as much honor and benefit from his election as the members of his own family. Hence a contract was made with a friend of the president's to erect the chapel, and he is said to have done very well under it. Then, when the church was done, it was discovered that it was situated on a hill that could not be reached easily, and it was necessary to erect a viaduct across the valley from the steps of the church to the hill on the other side. That was contracted for with another of Crespo's friends for \$160,000, and is said to have cost exactly half that amount. Thus the government afforded the people a new church and a fine iron viaduct by which to reach it, all at the expense of the tax-payers. There was no pressing need of another place of worship, as the town is full of them, with accommodations sufficient for double the population of Caracas, and service has seldom been held there; but the vow of Crespo's wife was fulfilled, and two of his friends were enabled to make small fortunes without any labor.

Crespo has one of the finest coffee plantations in the valley of Caracas, from which he derives a good income. These estates, or *estancias*, as they are called, all have poetic names, in which the imagination or the taste of the owner shows itself. Some are called in honor of famous characters in history, others in commemoration of notable events. A name is drawn from fiction or from poetry, or some favorite member of the family is distinguished by having a plantation christened in his, but more generally in her, honor.

There is a little romance of a young man, and a young woman, of course, who wanted to get married some years ago down in the Carabobo district, but were kept apart by

cruel and relentless parents. The young man had nothing but an unproductive coffee estate that had gone to ruin by the negligence of his father, a prominent local politician, while there was a rival with wealth and brilliant prospects. The girl loved the poor young man, but, according to the laws that govern such cases, married the other.

The disappointed one retired to his plantation, christened it in honor of his rival's bride, and commenced to fix up his fences, trim his coffee-trees, and clear out his irrigating ditches. It produced abundantly, even during the seasons when everybody else had poor crops, and he sent to market thousands of quintals of the best berries in the market, each bearing the name of the girl who had jilted him. It was not long before he was one of the wealthiest men in the community, and the product of his plantation is hard sought by all the buyers of the big European houses.

As a matter of course, the rival and the faithless woman ought to have had all sorts of bad-fortune; but they did not, so far as I can learn, and lived along pleasantly, having a lot of children, and passed the aimless, indolent lives that most of these people do. She got fat, and spent her days fanning herself in a rocking-chair, wearing a loose white wrapper, and eating *dulces* and screaming at the children; he wore a suit of white duck, a panama hat, sharp-pointed patent-leather boots with high heels, and smoked cigarettes at the club.

But there is a moral to the story, nevertheless, and it is this: when disappointed in love, a young man should get a coffee plantation, name it after the girl who jilted him, and go to work.

When you call upon the genuine, unadulterated native, whose manners and habits have not been modified by contact with the foreign residents or travel in other parts of

the world, you are received with stately and impressive formality. He greets you at the entrance with a cordial hand, and, bidding you welcome, places his house and all it contains "at your disposal." Then he ushers you into an immense drawing-room, the walls of which are covered with large mirrors, and portraits of his family, living and dead. There are large bunches of wax flowers under glass globes on the table and piano, and immense pink shells lying about in conspicuous places upon the floor. The furniture is heavy and handsome, and covered with linen to keep off the dust. Instead of a carpet, india-matting covers the floor. He conducts you to the sofa at the end of the room with great ceremony, for that is the seat of honor, and the two rows of chairs standing at right angles are occupied by himself and the members of the family, who drop in one after another, and go through the forms of introduction or greeting with languid effusiveness. The conversation is that of compliment, and it takes a good deal of time to ask after the health of each person present and those who have not shown themselves. If you attempt to talk business it is evaded in a courteous manner, for the genuine native will not permit himself to engage in anything but social hospitality when a stranger is within his doors. That is one of the unwritten laws of the ancient etiquette, and he will walk miles to meet you the next day rather than have it violated. And it is a good rule, too, although its enforcement often causes chagrin to the "hustling" Yankees who go to those parts.

Social life in Caracas is very much like what it is in the continental cities of Europe. Within the last fifteen years a great many foreigners have gone there to permanently settle and engage in business, until they now number nearly seven thousand, or about sixteen per cent. of the popula-

tion. The natives of the upper classes have been traveling a great deal, too, have spent much time in North America and Europe, and have imbibed many healthy ideas of modern civilization. Then, again, many of the young men have been sent to the colleges of England and the United States to be educated—have studied dentistry in Philadelphia, surgery in Vienna, engineering in Germany, and other sciences in France. They have married in those cities, and brought home wives of culture and wholesome influence, who have done much to enlarge the privileges of their sex and break down the old restrictions.

Thus the rigid customs of the ancient Spanish aristocracy have gradually been modified, and modern forms and customs adopted. A few years ago it was considered highly improper to visit the ladies of a family except in the presence of their husbands or fathers; in fact, any lady who received a call from a gentleman friend, or was known to be alone with him, forfeited her reputation. But nothing is thought of that now. It is expected that gentlemen will visit the wives and the daughters of their friends, and as it is not convenient for them to do so on business days, they take Sunday afternoon for it, when the ladies always stay at home to receive them.

Nor is it considered any longer improper for a miss or a matron to receive gentlemen callers alone. If a young man wants to visit a young lady he does not ask for her father, as he used to do, and see her only in his presence, or with some duenna sitting by, but he sends his card directly to the girl, and she comes into the parlor to receive him, just as her sisters in the United States are in the habit of doing. If he asks for the mother or any other member of the family, well and good. They come into the parlor if they are not otherwise engaged, but are not

required to do so, and do not intrude unless they are called for. It used to be necessary for a young man to make love through his father, but he takes matters into his own hands nowadays, and "sits up" with his sweetheart, just as they do in Massachusetts or Illinois.

It is not considered proper for a young lady to attend the theatre or other places of public amusement, nor to go to balls or parties without a chaperon, but she can walk alone on the street in the daytime, can promenade with her lover, can take him shopping with her, and might eat ice-cream if there was an opportunity to do so, but there isn't.

There is a place in Caracas where you can take a young lady to drink a glass of "leemonoddie," as they pronounce it, a sort of cross between soda-water and lemonade—a bottle of carbonated water flavored with the essence of lemon—and you can buy English soda and Apollinaris water, but it is usually stale and warm. You can get some stuff they call *helados*, which is the Spanish term for ice-cream, but it does not taste like the genuine article, and is usually nothing but diluted pineapple juice frozen into a mushy snow. It is weak and insipid, but the natives seem to like it, and eat large quantities. They are so fond of this sort of thing, and spend so much money in gratifying their appetites, that they ought to have something better, and those who have been in New York and have drank soda-water and eaten ice-cream always talk about it as one of the charms of North American existence. — The ladies of Caracas visit back and forth as those of the United States do, and every afternoon the residence streets are crowded with carriages of the callers. They give balls and dinner-parties, teas and musicales, and have all forms of fashionable entertainment. They have picnics also, although they are not encouraged, because the people,



as a general thing, prefer the shelter of a roof to foliage. Excursion parties to coffee *quintas* or plantations in the neighborhood of the city are common, and now that the telephone has been generally adopted it is easy to make the arrangements without much trouble. A favorite place for excursions is the little suburb of Antimino, about six miles from the city, where the temperature is usually eight or ten degrees cooler, and there are parks and private grounds beautifully laid out, and embellished with tropical plants, flowers, and fruits.

Here General Guzman Blanco has a magnificent mansion, which he formerly occupied several months during the year, and gave princely entertainments. His Antimino residence is admirably adapted for entertaining, being a large one-story structure, with wide balconies and porches, and surrounded by beautiful grounds, which are illuminated by gas and chinese-lanterns. Across the street from his residence he laid out at public expense a fine park, that can also be utilized, and in doors and out thousands of people can be comfortably accommodated. As there is a railway to the place from Caracas as well as a good carriage-road, there is no difficulty in getting back and forth, and Guzman usually had a special train for the transportation of his guests from the city.

His town-house is situated not far from the Capitol, and is considered as elegant as any in town, although the interior is decorated a good deal like a Long Island Sound steamboat, with gilded wood, "gingerbread work," and gay pictures of landscapes and domestic scenes painted on the panels of the doors and the walls of his drawing-rooms. His dining-room is one of the most imposing apartments I ever entered, but is decorated with tawdry taste and a display of gay china and silver plate on buffets and brack-

ets. The most peculiar feature of the house is the number of portraits of himself displayed. There is one in nearly every room. Guzman was as fond of having his face painted as Catherine the Second of Russia, and like her he kept several artists busy when he first came into power. You can find a full-length portrait in oil of "The Illustrious American" in nearly every office occupied by the government, and there are a large number in private houses which he presented to his friends. During his reign his face was to be seen in every hotel and saloon, and in many of the shops, and he even went so far as to appear in the character of St. Paul the Apostle in one of the churches.

The story goes that an artist, who had been engaged to decorate the Church of St. Rosalie, and of course was anxious to secure the favor of the Dictator, asked him to sit as a model for St. Paul, pretending that he noticed in Guzman's features a striking resemblance to the accepted pictures of the apostle. The general was greatly pleased, and now appears over the altar of the church clad in a purple toga, carrying an unclasped book in his hands, with St. Mark on one side of him and St. John on the other, and St. Luke and St. Matthew a little farther away. The artist made a hit when he paid this delicate compliment to the Dictator's vanity, and it brought to him a good many lucrative commissions.

But the most absurd picture formerly hung in the Hall of Representatives, just over the main entrance. It was the work of a Spanish sycophant named Canizares. It seems almost incredible that a man of Guzman Blanco's intelligence would permit himself to appear in such a way, or at least have such a preposterous picture hung in a public place, where it always caused a smile of derision even from those who dared not criticise it openly. The

Dictator appears on this canvas in a cocked hat and his most resplendent uniform, astride a magnificent black stallion. In the foreground, with very bad perspective, are the bodies of dead soldiers and dismantled cannon, over which his charger is about to spring, while above and behind him are troops of angels with wings and harps and all that sort of thing, cherubim and seraphim, supposed to be the choirs of heaven chanting his praises. The leader of the angelic host bears a wreath of laurel, with which she is about to crown him. I have seen dying martyrs done up in this way, but it is undoubtedly the only instance in which a live general ever permitted an artist to represent a sensation in the celestial regions over his military triumphs, and it is particularly absurd, because Guzman was not noted for his piety, and was at war with the church all the years he was in power.

Another picture, almost as bad, hung in the National Museum, in the room which is sacred to the memory of Simon Bolivar and is filled with his relics. Bolivar, as I have said, is as much revered in Venezuela as George Washington is in the United States; but during the days when the people were trying to compensate for their neglect and cruelty to their Liberator by paying homage to his memory and his dust, an artist got a commission to paint the scene at his death-bed. Instead of representing it truthfully, and adding a valuable contribution to the history of the country, he attempted to pay a questionable compliment to Guzman and the then influential men in the politics of the republic. Bolivar died on a common canvas cot, in a miserable dwelling, attended only by an Indian servant and a woman who had nursed him; but this picture represents him propped up with downy pillows in a luxurious apartment, and surrounded by men who were not born until

after he was buried. In the group around his bed appears Guzman Blanco—who came into the world a few months after the Liberator left it—clad in the gorgeous uniform of a general, and others of the same generation. It would be equally absurd to paint Harrison and Reed, Blaine and Sherman, Edmunds and Cleveland, gathered around the death-bed of George Washington.

The most conspicuous ornament in the city residence of Guzman Blanco was a life-size, full-length portrait of James G. Blaine, painted by a Washington artist when he was secretary of state under Garfield. About that time Guzman made a visit to the United States. Before he started, in order that he might pave the way for a grand reception, the Dictator presented the city of New York with a bronze statue of Simon Bolivar, which was erected in Central Park, and he arrived in time to participate in the ceremonies of unveiling it. He was received with marked honors, both by the people of New York and the government. A banquet was given him, eulogistic speeches were made, and he was immensely gratified. Then he went to Washington, where he was received in a like manner, and was tendered many attentions by Mr. Blaine, for whom he formed a warm admiration. As a souvenir of the visit Guzman directed the Venezuelan minister at Washington to have this portrait painted, and it has since hung in his residence at Caracas.

Two years afterwards Guzman returned the hospitality he received. The centennial anniversary of Bolivar's birth was celebrated in the city of Caracas by erecting in one of the principal plazas a statue to George Washington. It is a heroic figure of the man "who filled two continents with his benefits and the whole world with his fame," and it stands upon a massive granite pedestal. On one side is

the word "Washington," in large, plain letters; on another, "The Centenary of Bolivar, 1883;" on the third the coat-of-arms of the Republic of Venezuela, and on the fourth this ever-present legend:

GUZMAN BLANCO,  
The Illustrious American,  
Erected this statue.

The oration at the unveiling was delivered by Mr. Jehu Baker, the United States minister, and our country was represented at the ceremonies by the officers and sailors of the North American fleet. Uncle Sam's sailor boys were the guests of the nation. Guzman Blanco, who was then president, issued a decree forbidding any tradesman, hotel-keeper, hack-driver, bar-tender, or other subject of Venezuela to charge them for anything they ate or drank or wanted, and they had a fine time for several days.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE NEWSPAPERS OF CARACAS

THERE are not many newspapers in Venezuela. In Caracas are half a dozen or more daily publications, but only three or four that have a right to be dignified by that name. The remainder spring up occasionally when there is some local agitation, like campaign editions in the United States, and die when the excitement has subsided. Others are issued temporarily, for three or perhaps six months, in the interest of some ambitious politician, some candidate for Congress or the presidency. Their columns are filled with fulsome compliments for the man who supports them, arguments in favor of his election, a standing sketch of his life, communications signed by his friends or anonymous commending him to the voters, addresses he delivers here and there, and other articles calculated to keep his name before the public and win him votes.

It is the custom for every public man to have his organ, which is edited by himself or by some friend holding a government sinecure by his favor. These fugitive sheets, as they may be termed, are printed at the different job offices, paid for out of campaign funds, and appear and disappear as the fortunes of him they advocate rise and fall. If the candidate happens to be successful, the paper continues to be issued regularly, and may possibly take root and live for years. But originally they have no genu-

ine circulation, but are sold upon the street by newsboys and distributed gratis at the expense of the publisher.

Until recently there has been a censorship of the press, and papers that criticised the government were necessarily issued secretly. If the publisher was discovered he was likely to go to prison, and the office in which the printing was done was usually confiscated or closed by the police. But the press of Venezuela is free now, and the number of papers has largely increased, especially since the repudiation of General Guzman Blanco. People who have been compelled to keep their opinions of him to themselves are now using every means to express them.

The leading newspaper of the country is *El Diario de Caracas*, and it is conducted with considerable ability. It always supports the existing administration, and until within a few years has been a warm advocate of General Guzman Blanco and the vehicle of his views. *El Diario de Caracas* gets no cable despatches, but publishes a few telegrams from the other cities of the republic, which it receives free of cost over the government wires. It also has a number of readable letters from various parts of the country and from Europe. One page is generally devoted to the decrees of the president, other official announcements, and the reports and correspondence of the various officers of the government. Two or three columns of editorials usually appear, and about as much space is devoted to an instalment of a serial story. The local page contains brief but interesting accounts of events in the city, which are written in a dignified, matter-of-fact way, without any attempt at creating a sensation. There is considerable advertising, for which reasonably good rates are paid, and the circulation of four or five thousand copies daily at twelve dollars a year makes it a profitable investment.

*El Pregonero* is a recently established morning paper, upon the modern North American plan, liberal in politics, but rather independent in its views. It is a brighter and more readable sheet than most of the others, but it is not conducted with as much dignity or solemnity. The editorials have a reckless tone, and consistency is not considered a jewel in the office. *El Liberal* occasionally has a few stickfuls of cable news, but it is usually padded out from despatches previously printed in a little commercial paper that has the only genuine cable despatches received in Caracas.

This paper, which is not more than seven by nine inches in size, is devoted to market reports, the announcements of steamship arrivals and departures, lists of passengers upon such vessels, commercial advertisements, and about half a column of very brief telegrams from the United States and Europe.

Another paper is the *Gaceta Oficial*, published by the government. It contains nothing but official announcements, reports from the various executive departments, the proceedings of Congress and the text of laws enacted by that body, the text of concessions granted by the government, diplomatic correspondence, a directory of officials and their residences, etc.

A good deal of original poetry is published in all the newspapers, and essays upon abstruse topics often appear, as well as controversies, political, social, and theological. The advertisements are amusing to the North American reader. In a copy that lies before me a certain merchant announces that he has received by the last American steamer a consignment of Massachusetts codfish, and respectfully begs his friends and patrons to call at once and secure a supply of the fascinating delicacy before it is all sold. Advertisers are a great deal more formal and cour-



teous than in the United States. For example, a man who has a vacant house to let, says :

"The *élite* of Caracas are respectfully solicited to inform themselves by this notice that the undersigned desires to lease a magnificent residence, possessing every convenience that the most cultivated taste could desire, spacious and superbly decorated, and situated in the most fashionable quarter. All this the owner is willing to guarantee upon his honor, also that it will accommodate a numerous and fastidious family. Information concerning the location and terms will be cordially furnished at 7 Calle Este."

There is an advertisement of a store called "El Arca de Noe" (Noah's Ark), where everything needful can be purchased, and another of a dress-making establishment called "La Solitude," at which the latest Paris fashions can be seen and bridal trousseaus furnished promptly. A cabinet-maker, who has christened his shop "La Industria," calls attention to some fine furniture he has in stock ; and a firm of undertakers offers to perform service for the dead in the most delicate and elegant manner. Another merchant has some very "desirable" beer, with which he is "prepared to favor the community."

Births, marriages, and deaths are announced promptly. In connection with the two former the congratulations of friends are invited, and in the latter their sympathy. Some of the death notices are unique. The following is a sample :



## MARÍA E. GARCIA

Sobre su tumba el 27 de mayo de 1889

*María!*... Deslizóse como ráfaga fugaz de brisa primaveral la existencia de esta hermosa niña, que por sus eximias virtudes constituyó hasta ayer el encanto de sus padres y amigos, que aún la lloran llenos de tristeza y amargo desconsuelo.

*María!*... Al pronunciar este nombre, que en día feliz llevara un ángel de eternal recordación, el corazón se oprime de pesar . . . la mente se remonta á lo infinito en pos de simpática visión y el pecho palpita con violencia á impulso de emoción profunda. . .

*María!*... Hoy venimos donde tu tumba á ofrendarte nuestras lágrimas, elocuente idioma del dolor y fiel tributo de veneración á tu memoria, como lo hicimos también el día en que despojándote de prestada vestidura, desplegaste, sonreída, tus alas de armiño para remontarte luego á otros mundos en busca de la verdadera perfección. . .

A. M. C. R.

Of this the following is a translation :

*Maria*—As a fugitive gust of a spring breeze the existence of this beautiful girl was dissipated, who by her eminent virtues constituted until yesterday the enchantment of her parents and friends, that now mourn her full of sadness and bitter disconsolation.

*Maria*—At the pronounciation of this name, that in a happy day may bear an angel of eternal remembrance, the heart is oppressed with sorrow—the mind flies to the infinite in pursuit of some sympathetic vision, and the breast palpitates violently with the impulse of profound emotion.

*Maria*—To-day we come to your tomb to offer out tears, the eloquent language of sorrow and the true tribute of veneration to your memory, as also we observed the day in which, stripping yourself of borrowed vestments, you distended, smiling, your ermine wings to soar to other worlds in search of true perfection."

Here is another :



### PÉSAME

Anteayer bajó al sepulcro, el honrado y laborioso señor PAULO EMILIO GOMEZ; y al lamentar tan irreparable pérdida, enviamos nuestra sincera expresión de dolor á sus aflijidos deudos, especialmente á nuestro estimado amigo y compañero el señor Guillermo Gomez, hermano del finado.

*Elpidio Salvador Gomez.*

Translation :

### CONDOLENCE

Day before yesterday went down to the sepulchre the honest and laborious Mr. Paul Emilio Gomez, and at lamenting so irreparable a loss we send our sincere expression of sorrow to his afflicted relatives, especially to our esteemed friend and companion Mr. William Gomez, brother of the deceased.

Peculiar funeral customs that were in vogue in Venezuela fifteen or twenty years ago, and were inherited from Spain, have been abandoned, and are seldom seen nowadays. Funerals are managed about as they are in the United States, and the etiquette that governs people in mourning is about the same, except when a gentleman or lady of the old school dies—some grandee of the ancient monarchical *régime*, who even in his coffin will not approve the innovations of the liberal party. But these tenacious Bourbons have pretty nearly all expired. Only a few remain to reproach the present generation for its progressiveness, and relate tales of what was done under the king.

In the towns of the interior one often is allowed to witness the methods and the etiquette of the past, for the light of the modern sun has not yet thrown its direct rays over the mountains, and the people beyond them only now and then get a gleam. When a man of social position dies there, it is customary for the surviving members of his

family to issue cards of announcement, and printed invitations to the funeral, which are not sent out in the same way as invitations to a dinner or a ball, but are delivered at the houses of those to whom they are addressed by men connected with some undertaking establishment. These messengers are clothed in long stockings, knickerbockers, waistcoat and coat, all of black silk, and cocked hats from which long pieces of crape like streamers hang down behind. This sombre livery may be relieved by silver cord up the seams of the breeches, around the sleeves of their coats, and around their hats, and, if it is a child that is dead, they wear white gloves and ties instead of black, and a white waistcoat. They usually go on their errands in pairs, and walk the streets solemnly, each carrying a long staff like the baton of a drum-major, with a festoon of crape hanging to it. If the family is wealthy a carriage is employed for them.

A selection of guests is made for the services at the house, of relatives and the more intimate friends, while the invitations for those at the church are more general, and include all the acquaintances of the deceased, at least of his own caste. It is customary at the conclusion of the brief ceremonies at the house for some one who has prepared himself beforehand to present a written testimonial to the worth of the one they mourn, or a series of resolutions, which are read, adopted as the sentiments of the company, and placed in the casket before it is sealed—a sort of post-mortem indorsement of the deceased's character, so that if the remains should ever be disinterred posterity might know what sort of a soul inhabited them. Then the body is taken to the church, where mass is sung, and afterwards to the cemetery. The persons invited to the house are expected to return there upon the conclusion of the services at the grave, and find a luncheon or dinner spread with wines and other luxuries.

Within the next ten days all persons who were asked to the funeral are expected to pay visits of condolence. They will find the furniture and pictures all draped in mourning (which remains upon them for a year), and in the parlor the wife and family of the deceased waiting to receive them in solemn formality. Sunlight and air is excluded from the room, and numerous candles are burning. The hostess, if she be a widow, sits in state, surrounded by her sons and daughters, and without rising from her seat listens to the words of sympathy offered by her visitors.

Most of the cemeteries are surrounded by high walls. These are honey-combed with gigantic "pigeon-holes," nine feet deep by three feet wide and high, and having marble slabs with which they can be sealed. These pockets can be rented by the year, or permanently secured by purchase, and used for tombs, while upon the slab at the end the inscription can be placed. In case of any failure to pay the rent the fact is advertised, and then after sufficient notice the officers of the cemetery are permitted to take the body out and place it in the potter's field, usually a large pit known as *el carnero*. But there are burials in the earth, as in the Northern States, and in vaults and sepulchres, some of them very handsome. The graves are seldom decorated with plants or even fresh flowers, which is rather strange in a land of botanical luxuriance, but ornaments made of shells and wire and beads are hung over the tombstones, in which a photograph of the dead is often encased. On a great many tombstones—in fact, upon nearly every one that marks the grave of a woman—appear the words "*Ella Duerme*." This perplexes a stranger who does not understand Spanish, but it is not the name of a girl; it means, "She sleeps."

The name of the principal cemetery at Caracas is "Paradise."

## CHAPTER XV

### AGRICULTURE IN VENEZUELA

THERE are two market-houses in Caracas. The old one was built long ago, nobody appears to remember just when, and is a close, dismal place. There are a few cell-like rooms or vaults in the walls, in which merchants display a variety of wares, while most of the butchers, hucksters, and fruit-dealers are herded in an open court. The few clumsy stands, imperfectly sheltered from the sun and the rain, are so crowded that one cannot pass through easily at any time, while at seven or eight o'clock in the morning, when the greatest number of purchasers are there, locomotion is almost impossible.

The new market-house, situated at a much more favorable location, one block from the Municipal Theatre, is about as convenient a structure for the purpose as can be imagined. The roof is of galvanized iron, the walls of lattice-work, and the floor of cement. The stalls are well arranged, with shelves for the display of goods, bins for vegetables, trays for flowers, and in the meat and fish department all the counters are of marble. But it is empty. Nobody patronizes it. Although the other place is uncomfortably jammed, and entirely without conveniences, the people have been in the habit of going there to buy and sell all their lives, and, according to that stubborn resistance to all innovations that is so characteristic of them, they continue to do

as they have done. They spread their vegetables and fruits on the ground and squat among them, when they might have a neat and tidy stand. Perhaps the buyer would be willing to go to the other place if the sellers would remove there, or at least a portion of them, but the latter belong to the peon class, and are the most stubborn and least enterprising of all.

Most of the vegetables and other produce is brought in every morning from the country on the backs of donkeys, and at daylight long trains of these little animals begin to file into the city, with market and men sitting on their backs. No matter how big the load is, the driver must perch on top of it, and the slender legs of the beast look like pipe stems under a big loaf of bread. Sometimes only their heads, or perhaps only the tips of their noses, are visible under a pile of hay or sugar-cane, of which large quantities are brought into town for fodder, while the rear view does not disclose any animal at all, only a mysterious pile of green plumes moving silently along the road.

The fruits and vegetables of Venezuela are rich and numerous; in fact, almost anything that grows upon the earth's surface can be produced within the limits of the country. Among the native cereals that can be bought in the Caracas market are rice, indian corn, wheat, barley, and sometimes rye; of farinaceous fruits and roots are the different varieties of the banana or plantain, which are numerous; the yucca, the arrow-root, cassava, mandioca, of which tapioca is made, and bread-fruit. There are also sweet and white potatoes, and no end of delicious vegetables—all that we get in the United States, and many that we know nothing of. The fruits are not as palatable as those of the temperate zone, although some are delicious, but they are too rich, too sweet, and oily. The pineapples are wonder-

ful, and almost melt in your mouth, while the zapote, after it has been in an ice-box for a time, tastes like frozen custard, and the aguacate, a standard fruit, which is known in the United States as the alligator pear, makes a delicious salad. Yet for every-day diet there isn't anything in the tropics that will compare with the Concord grape or the russet apple.

But the Venezuelans have one great advantage over us. They have the same fresh vegetables the year round. They can plant their gardens whenever they please. The seeds will sprout and the vegetables will mature in February as well as in June, in November as well as in August, although in the dry season they have to be irrigated. And irrigated gardens are always more reliable than those left to nature's moisture. As the old Yankee down in Maine said :

"The Lord sends the rain upon the just and the unjust, but he ain't as regular as he might be. Sometimes he overdoes it, and then agin he's tollable scrimpy."

The irrigated fields and gardens will always produce in great abundance, and by regulating his planting a farmer may have fresh pease and beans, asparagus and lettuce, new potatoes and tomatoes every month in the year. They have delicious cantaloupes and watermelons, but no green corn on the ear. They might have it; they can raise anything in their warm, deep soil, but they do not know how; and they cannot cook their vegetables properly, or prepare them for the table to suit the North American taste.

The Spanish-American wants everything swimming in oil and seasoned with garlic, or smothered in rich dressings with oil as their base. At the hotels, and in most of the private houses, the cool, crisp lettuce will be brought



upon the table chopped almost as fine as rice, and mixed with garlic or the tops of onions. It took me about a week to persuade the cook at the hotel to let me have lettuce in the natural state, and then it was brought to the table in the head, just as it was purchased in the market.

They have some queer things on the bills of fare. We studied over one item that appeared almost daily as "garden eggs," and when we ordered some out of curiosity it turned out to be egg-plant. Another was "papas en camisas." A "camisa" ordinarily is a night-shirt, or the jacket of a pyjama. Hence the natural inference was that we had landed among a community of cannibals who were serving up somebody's papa in his night-shirt. But papa in Spanish means potato, and this mysterious article of food was nothing more than an ordinary steamed potato with the skin or jacket on. A cantaloupe is called a "melone," and the word sounds like the name of a numerous and highly respected Irish family. So when we wanted a portion of that toothsome fruit we called for a "malony." And a woman's bonnet is called a "begorra."

There are some even queerer things in the Spanish language, however. The pupil of the eye, for example, is "the little girl of the eye" when literally translated—"la nina de ojo." And, although it is not quite so poetic, the nostrils are "the windows of the nose"—"las ventanas de la nariz." Then, again, the "dado" is the finger, and the thumb is "la dado pulgar." "Pulgar" means flea, hence the thumb is "the flea finger," which illustrates one of the occupations of the people.

The meat in Venezuela is poor, as it is in every hot country, and the same can be said of the milk. There is no turf in the tropics, no meadows, no lawns, no hills covered with emerald grass, and no hay. But if a joke

will be permitted, I might correct myself and remark that there is a great deal of "no hay"—more than anything else in the entire country. For those who do not understand Spanish this inoffensive pun needs a diagram, for in that language "no hay" means "there is none," and is one of the most common expressions in use among the people. If you ask a waiter at the hotel for a glass of ice-water, he will answer,

"No hay."

There is none; there never is except at meal-time, when a chunk of ice is brought from the factory by a boy for the especial benefit of North American guests. If you ask a clerk in a store for some article, the reply will be,

"No hay."

And so it goes. You hear those two words constantly from morning till night, and yet, speaking in English, there is no hay in the country. The cattle and the horses are fed almost exclusively upon the foliage of the sugar-cane. When the cane is cut the leaves are stripped off and taken to market on the backs of donkeys, while the stalks are sent to the mill to have the juice crushed out. This sort of fodder does not make good milk or good meat, and the traveller in the tropics will not enjoy either. When you ask a North American what he would like most to eat, provided he could get anything he wanted, he will invariably answer,

"A juicy beefsteak, a glass of cool milk, and cream for my coffee."

The cows are generally allowed to run about the streets and the fields, to pick up what they can, and are given fodder morning and night; but they are milked only once a day, and then at no particular place, but wherever the owner can catch them. They are lean, hungry-looking

animals, and kick like mules, so the milkers tie their legs with a rope or a strap before beginning, just as they slip a broad strap attached to the bridle of a mule over his eyes when they dismount. The milk is brought to town in big cans on the backs of donkeys, and is always boiled as soon as it is received by the customers, for there is not such a thing as a refrigerator in the entire country.

There is ice enough, or at least sufficient for the demand, and it is all artificial, made in a factory, the capacity of which is 2000 pounds a day for a city of 55,000 inhabitants. None is ever delivered at the houses. If you want it you have to go to the factory, where it is sold at five cents a pound, and the customer instead of the dealer loses what melts while it is being taken to its destination. But very few people use ice. The natives drink wine at all their meals, and between times when they are thirsty they go to a big jar called an *olla*, which stands under a filter in the patio, and help themselves. The jar is porous, and its contents are kept cool by the evaporation of the moisture upon its outer surface.

Butter is scarce and expensive, and outside the larger cities cannot be obtained at all. The native milk is so thin and weak that no cream ever rises to its surface, hence no butter can be made; then, as there are no cold-storage establishments and no refrigerators, the imported article is difficult to keep. After it has been exposed to a hundred degrees of heat for several days in succession, that which is imported from the United States looks and tastes like lamp-oil, and is scarcely fit for lubricating purposes. Bringing it a mile and a half in an open lighter from the steamer to the dock will reduce the consistency of a tub of butter, as one may imagine, and after it has once melted there is no means of making it hard again.

The Dutch dairymen in Holland prepare their butter expressly for exportation to tropical climates, and are reasonably successful. It is put up in one-pound tins, hermetically sealed, and then packed in boxes of sawdust, which shelter it from the heat. These pound cans cost sixty cents, and, being so expensive, their contents are used sparingly and handled with the greatest degree of economy possible.

One of the most remarkable of the natural curiosities to be found in Venezuela is the *palo de leche*, or milk-tree, from which, when tapped, will flow a plentiful supply of creamy sap that resembles cow's milk both in taste and appearance, although it is thicker—as thick as the ordinary cream—and grows more dense the longer it is exposed to the atmosphere. It is wholesome and nutritious both when raw and when cooked, and a chemical analysis shows it to be composed of water, albumen, and wax. The latter can be easily extracted, is as pure as that made by the bees, and is used for the same purposes. The Indians make candles of it.

There is another tree called *la candela*, which supplies a sort of tallow for candles, an excellent oil for lamps, and a popular beverage named *chicha* is made of its fermented fruit. There is still another tree, known as the *carapa*, found in some portions of the northern Andes, which, when cut into strips, will burn like a candle, except that it splutters a good deal because of the moisture mixed with the sap.

Cheese is made in Venezuela from milk curded in the usual way. The curds are boiled in the whey, then pulled like taffy; a little salt is added, when the dough is moulded into little cakes and hung up in nets to drip and dry.

Bread is made by first pounding the grain—corn, wheat,

rye, or barley—to flour in large mortars of hard wood or stone. Next it is cleansed by having water poured over it, the chaff rising to the surface. Then the flour is mixed with water and ground to paste between two stones, moulded into flat cakes, wrapped in leaves, and baked on flat stones which have been heated by having a fire built upon them. An earthen jar is usually placed over the baking, so as to retain the heat.

One cannot buy coffee plantations in Venezuela except for their full value, for they have gradually passed into the possession of men of means, who regard them as the safest and most profitable of investments. A good plantation, yielding 1000 quintals of coffee—they do not go by acres, but by the number of trees and their average yield, and a quintal is 125 pounds—is worth, at the lowest estimate, \$50,000, and could not be bought anywhere near Caracas for much less than that. But it would pay a net income of \$12,000 a year at present prices, and from \$8000 to \$10,000 at ordinary prices. Coffee has sold in years back as low at \$9.50 a hundred. Now it is worth \$21.50 in the Caracas market. But even at the lowest price such a plantation would pay a revenue of \$5000 a year, or 10 per cent. net upon the value I have named.

The situation of a plantation also governs its value considerably. The healthiness and the temperature of the location, its convenience to market, the amount of water available, and the character of the improvements add or detract from the worth of the property. The planter seldom lives upon his *quinta* for more than a few months in the year, but must keep up an establishment in the city, where his wife can have social enjoyments and his children an opportunity of attending school. There are some plantations in the immediate neighborhood of Caracas which

would not be sold for twice the sum I have named, and the incomes they furnish their owners justify the value at which they are held. Venezuela exports a hundred million pounds of coffee, and at a profit of from seven to nine cents a pound, which shows the magnitude of the business and the wealth it is bringing into the country.

About one-half of the product now comes to the United States, where it is sold as Mocha coffee. It comes so near Mocha in flavor and appearance that none but an expert can detect the difference, and has almost entirely driven the genuine berry out of the market. Some years ago there was a plague in Arabia where the Mocha coffee is grown, and shipments were almost entirely stopped. Then the merchants were obliged to find a substitute, and the Venezuela berry was so popular that it has kept its place. Twenty years ago there were not a hundred bags of Caracas coffee sold in the United States annually, but now the export reaches nearly fifty million pounds. A few years ago the house of Boulton was alone in the trade. Now there are a dozen houses in the United States and several in Canada that make it their exclusive business.

The product is not increasing in Venezuela, and that keeps up the price. Few new plantations are being started. At former prices, and when the government was unsettled, it did not pay to invest money in starting plantations, for it takes about seven years to bring trees to the producing age. First the ground is cleared and burned over two or three times to get rid of the brush; then it is ploughed and laid off into squares. Then shade trees must be planted to shelter the coffee bushes from the sun. Every plantation is shaded. Banana-trees are put out originally to protect the young plants, for they shoot up rapidly and have luxurious foliage; but for permanent shade a large, quick-

growing tree called the *bucuara*, which resembles the sycamore, is used. The coffee seed is planted in a nursery, and seedlings are transplanted to the field when they are about a foot high. They must be kept free from weeds and have a good deal of water. A coffee plantation without irrigation facilities is worthless; but after the bushes are fully grown they do not require so much trouble or expense to care for.

The blossoms, which are as beautiful as those of the orange flower, begin to appear about the third year, and in the fifth year a small crop may be expected; but the trees do not mature until the seventh year, and a full crop will not be gathered before the eighth. A well-shaded estate will last sixty or seventy-five years, and bear fruit regularly. There is one plantation just outside the city of Caracas which was planted in 1810, and another that was planted at the end of the last century. Both are producing luxuriously. Coffee is a tough crop, is never affected by bugs or worms or grasshoppers, although the trees may perish from thirst or the fruit may rust from too much rain.

There are several kinds of coffee. The "Caracas washed" is the best, and its superiority is due to the fact that it is treated with so much care while being cured. All the pulp and extraneous substances are carefully washed by hand from the berry, and therefore there is nothing to impair its flavor. When ripe, the color of the fruit is scarlet. It resembles a cherry in size and shape, but tastes very differently, being excessively bitter and rasping. A persimmon is mild in comparison. When the fruit is picked, it is run through a crusher, which breaks the skin and separates the pulp from the seeds. Next it is put through a sort of separator, and then stirred violently

around in a whirling basin of water to wash it clean, for it is essential to remove all the pulp from the kernel. The Caracas washed coffee is then all passed through the hands of women and girls, who rub it, separate the large from the small kernels, and take out all that are defective. Then it is spread out on cement floors to dry, placed in sacks, and sent to market. Coffee should be at least three years old to taste its best, for when it is green it has a rank flavor, which disappears with age.

There is plenty of good coffee land going to waste in Venezuela, and there will never be any less of the staple consumed than now. Statistics show that the consumption of coffee in the United States alone has more than doubled in the last ten years, and that there would not be sufficient in the crop of the world to supply the demand unless foreign substances were used for adulteration.

Cocoa, the chocolate bean, is an even more profitable crop than coffee, and its price is almost as fixed as that of gold. In some portions of the country cocoa beans are still used as legal-tender, and in many of the smaller towns customers at market have to take them in lieu of small change, as they use rolls of bread in Ecuador. Coffee was introduced into the country from Arabia by the Franciscan monks, but cocoa was indigenous to the soil and was used in large quantities by the Indians for food at the time of the discovery. It was not liked by the Spaniards at first, but was introduced into France by the Franciscans, who were always enterprising, and the French cooks at once adopted it into great favor. Cardinal Richelieu is said to have been the first chocolate-drinker of any fame, and to have set the fashion of using it.

There are two kinds: the native cocoa, called *El Criollo*, and an imported plant called *El Trinitario*, that was brought



to the country from Trinidad and other of the West India islands. The former is of superior quality, and scarce. Not more than five or six thousand bags are raised annually, and it is worth from thirty-two to thirty-five dollars gold per bag of one hundred and ten pounds. Of the Trinidad variety about a hundred thousand bags are raised, and it sells from eighteen to twenty dollars a bag. The native plant requires peculiar soil and care, and grows best in the hottest and most unhealthful regions, so that there is not much comfort in its cultivation. The cocoa plantations are found all along the coast, and are more profitable than coffee on account of their requiring less attention, as well as because of the greater value of the crop.

While coffee can be successfully cultivated under a minimum temperature of 60° Fahrenheit, the cocoa-tree, for proper development and remunerative crops, requires a temperature of at least 80° Fahrenheit, hence the area of the cocoa belt is comparatively restricted. Besides the conditions of temperature, this crop needs a moist soil and humid atmosphere, therefore the lands along the coast of the Caribbean Sea, sloping from the foot-hills to the shore, bedewed by the exhalations from the sea and irrigated by the numerous rivulets that course down the valleys, are found to be, in all respects, well adapted to the profitable cultivation of cocoa. And while the lands in the interior possessing facilities for irrigation may be said to be equally as good for the purpose, yet the absence of roads, and the consequently difficult transportation of produce on the backs of donkeys over rugged mountain-paths, materially reduce the profits on the crop before it reaches the market.

A cocoa plantation is set out in quite the same manner as a coffee orchard, except that the young stock may be transplanted from the nursery after two months' growth.

No preparation of the soil is deemed necessary and no manures are applied. The young trees are planted about fifteen feet equidistant, which will accommodate two hundred trees to the acre. Between the rows and at like spaces are planted rows of the bucuara-tree, that serve to shade the soil as well as to shield the young trees from the torrid sun. Small permanent trenches must be maintained from tree to tree throughout the entire length of the rows, so that at least once in each week the stream descending from the mountains may be turned into these little channels and bear needful moisture to trees and soil. At the age of five years the plantation begins to bear fruit, and annually yields two crops, that ripening in June being termed the crop of San Juan, and that maturing at Christmas being known as the crop of La Navidad. The average age to which the trees attain under proper care may be estimated at forty years, during which period they will give fair to full crops of fruit; but of course it must be understood that, as in our fruit orchards, new trees must be set from time to time to replace those that may be decayed or blighted. The average crop of cocoa plantations at ten years of age, and under a proper state of cultivation, will amount to five hundred or six hundred pounds per acre.

The fruit or seed of the cocoa in form, size, and color is quite similar to the almond. These seeds to the number of sixty or eighty are incased in a pod that, except in color, is the counterpart of a young muskmelon, being elongated and ribbed in the same manner. Its color when green is like that of the egg-plant, but on ripening it assumes a reddish hue. A peculiarity of the cocoa is that it bears "from the ground up," the trunk of the tree yielding fruit as well as the branches. Upon ripening, the pods are gathered from the tree and heaped in piles on the

ground, where they are left for some days to ferment, after which they burst open, when the seed must be shelled out. After a light exposure to the sun, during which time great care must be taken to protect them from the rain, they are sacked and ready for the market.

The good people in Venezuela say that all the best cocoa goes to Europe, and not a pound of the El Criollo to the United States. It is a fact that you can buy chocolate in New York at the high-priced retail stores for about half the money that is charged at the Caracas factories. The best is eighty cents a pound at the factories, and the retailers charge a dollar for it. You can get a good quality for sixty and the ordinary for fifty cents a pound. None can be had less than that, while in New York or other cities of the United States it can be bought at the groceries for twenty-five, thirty, and forty cents a pound. The Caraqueñians say that our manufacturers cannot possibly sell a cake of honest chocolate for that price, but adulterate it with pipe-clay, flour, and other foreign substances.

There are very few roads in the country, and those are only found in the neighborhood of the large cities. Nineteenths of the interior transportation is done on the backs of donkeys—little patient burros, so small and light that a man could lift a large one, yet they are the strongest beasts in the world in proportion to their size, and can carry all that can be packed upon them. Their limbs are not larger than the arms of a child, and their hoofs are about the size of a baseball cut in half, but they will climb any mountain-path that a man can scramble over, and are as enduring and patient as time itself.

Two bags of coffee weighing one hundred pounds each can be strapped on the saddle, and then the owner will mount and ride upon the top of them, with his legs hang-

ing down each side of the donkey's nose. I have often seen two men and occasionally three on the back of a little beast that would not weigh more than any one of them, and it trotted along the road as cheerfully as a child going home from school. When they carry sugar-cane they are loaded until you cannot see either their legs or neck, but only a little head with bright eyes and nodding ears sticking out from under a mountain of foliage. The natives strap a railroad rail to three or four donkeys, and carry heavy timber upon them, using much ingenuity and skill in securing a proper balance and fastening the load.

As a usual thing the *mozos*, as the drivers are called, are gentle and kind to their animals, and not so abusive as men of other races. They carry a stick and often beat the load, or crack a whip violently if they have one, but you seldom see a donkey beaten. The native horses are tough little bronchos like those of Texas and Colorado, with great endurance and considerable speed. They will travel all day without food and water, and the fashion the city hackmen have of plunging through the narrow streets is said to be due to the inability of the animals to go slowly. No matter whether you are driving "by the job" or by the hour, the horses are kept constantly at the top of their speed, and the rough stone pavements and constant apprehension of collisions or other accidents rob a ride of most of its pleasure.

The saddle-horses are superb. They are trained to a gentle amble called the *trote de paseo*, which is as comfortable as a cradle, and so gentle that an experienced horseman can carry a full glass of water in his hand without spilling a drop. It is said that this *trote de paseo* is natural, that it is inbred, inherited from the imported animals that were ridden in the early days when it was the fashion

for the rider to sit upon a saddle-cloth fringed all around with tassels of silver; that the horses did not like to have these ornaments dangling against their legs, and took a mincing gait so as to carry them with as little motion as possible.

Horseback riding is very common. Nearly every gentleman owns a saddle-horse, although I have never seen a lady mounted in Venezuela, except when travelling in the interior, where there are no roads fit for carriages. As this is the condition of the greater part of the country, the people are compelled to take to the saddle. I have often seen young men ride up to a barred window in which some fair señorita is sitting and chat with her, and as the windows are sometimes beyond ordinary reach, a mounted lover has an advantage over a pedestrian who has to do his courting that way. And one often sees beggars on horseback.

There are many handsome equipages in Caracas, drawn by North American horses in showy silver-mounted harness, and attended by liveried coachmen and footmen. There are livery-stables also, at which one can hire as elegant a turnout as can be obtained in New York or Chicago, with attendants in livery. The hours for driving are from four to six or a little later; but the privileges are limited, for during the dry season it is usually too dusty to go off the city pavements, and during the wet season there is too much mud. The only resorts then are the Iron Bridge, which crosses a little river at one extremity of the city, where there are some beautiful palms and refreshment booths, and the Paseo Guzman Blanco at the other extremity, which is one of the most notable resorts in town.

Guzman Blanco made some good roads leading to the villages around Caracas, cutting through the hills or around

their shoulders so as to get easy grades, and building some excellent stone bridges. But they are not kept in repair, and the weather is very severe upon them. During the rainy season, which lasts five or six months, there is a heavy fall of water daily, and the roads become almost impassable because of the mud. Then during the long dry season the mud becomes dust, and the wind carries it over the country. Therefore, unless expensive macadamized pavement is laid it is difficult to keep a road in good order.

There is a notion among the people that the application of water to the skin, after having been upon a journey or when fatigued or when one has been exposed to the sun, is certain to produce a fever that is likely to be fatal. They say that you must not open the pores of the skin when you are heated or tired or have gone from one climate to another, and the great majority of the natives would consider it suicide, or at least "trifling with Providence," to wash even their hands and faces for twenty-four hours after a journey.

When I came off the ship at La Guayra, the port of Caracas, I expressed a desire to go to Macuto, a neighboring village where there is fine surf bathing, and take a salt-water bath. My friends, the collector of the port, the commandante or mayor of the city, and even the United States consul who had lived there for eight years and had become impregnated with this notion, strongly protested. After having been at sea for nine days and coming from a colder climate, such imprudence would result seriously if not fatally, and I must not touch water until the next day at least. But I went all the same, had a glorious plunge in the surf, and came out invigorated; but the good people considered it a miracle that I did not die in the hospital.

Once I passed a day in the country with a very estimable

gentleman, a native. The temperature was 85° in the shade, the roads were dusty, and we came home very tired. When I announced my intention to take a bath before going to bed, he warned me in the most earnest and solemn manner that such an act would certainly bring on a fever.

"When you get to your room," he said, "rub your neck and your head with *cana* (the native rum), but do not bathe for twenty-four hours. Don't even wash your face and hands until morning. It is most dangerous to open the pores of the skin when you are fatigued."

But I had the bath, despite the kindly warning, and felt none the worse and much the better for it. His only comment was that I must have a constitution of steel, and that another time I would be punished for violating the laws of nature.

## CHAPTER XVI

### RELIGION IN CARACAS

LIKE all South American cities, Caracas has a large number of churches, the supply being entirely out of proportion to the population, and sufficient for a place of three times its size ; but unlike most of the other cities of the continent, there is not one of handsome architecture or of more than ordinary appearance. The cathedral is in no respect worthy of the importance of the ecclesiastical system of which it is the centre. If the steeple were taken off, its exterior would look like a jail or a fortress, and its interior is as bare and dismal as a warehouse. It was originally erected in 1641, shortly after a destructive earthquake, and its walls were constructed so as to give it more than ordinary power of resistance to subterranean convulsions. Therefore, it endured the terrible earthquake of 1812, when nearly everything else in the city was destroyed, and is likely to last forever unless some president is patriotic enough to order it torn down. As General Sheridan once said of the equally ugly Pension Building at Washington, " Its greatest defect is that it is fireproof."

The style of architecture is said to be Tuscan, but I should think it could be as properly classed in any school, for it certainly resembles no other structure in existence. On the top of the steeple stands a statue of Faith—a comely figure which looks down upon the principal plaza of the city



undisturbed by the clanging of a chime of cracked bells that make the most doleful sounds imaginable. And they strike even the quarter-hours of the clock. Besides keeping the people awake by striking the quarter-hours all night, the bells commence to ring for early mass at five o'clock in the morning, and on Sundays and saints' days, which occur about three times a week, they keep it up until afternoon; so that persons accustomed to quiet find it as difficult to sleep in the morning at Caracas as the countrymen who go to New York because of the rattle of the wagons over the pavements. But the residents of the city, who have been born and raised to the discord of the cathedral bells, do not seem to mind it.

The interior of the cathedral is even uglier than the exterior, if such a thing is possible. It is more like a dismal vault than a place of worship, being a long, narrow, dark apartment, which looks narrower than it is, because of two rows of immense pillars that support the roof. The altar is stretched across about the centre, for half the church is amply sufficient for all purposes, and that is seldom filled except on Easter and some other great days. On one side is a row of naves, five in number, like the teeth of a saw, with the main auditorium as the blade.

In each of the naves is a chapel. One of them has been handsomely fitted up as a memorial to some devotee whose name is inscribed upon a stained-glass window; but the rest are barren. The nave of the Sanctissima Trinidad contained the dust and the monument of Simon Bolivar until they were removed to the Pantheon. Another nave is dedicated to St. George, who is the patron saint of Caracas as well as Great Britain, but does not appear to maintain harmony among his devotees; for nowhere on earth, not even in Ireland, are the English people so hated as in Venezuela.

All of the churches are under the care of the government, and have been since Guzman Blanco had a falling-out with the pope. This occurred in 1876. Although born and baptized a Catholic, Guzman was connected with the Liberal Party, while the priests have sympathized with the Conservative or Clerical Party, as it is often called. Therefore, when he came into power he expelled the Jesuits, who were the most active of partisans, and the monks and nuns were made to follow soon after. The monastic and other church property was confiscated for the benefit of the government, and the present Capitol stands upon the former site of one of the largest convents in South America, erected three hundred years ago. Other monasteries and convents were devoted to the use of the government for various purposes, and the church was stripped of all it held of value. The parish schools were abolished, the civil rite of marriage was declared the only legal form, the cemeteries were opened to Jews and heretics, and the priests were deprived of their power as well as their fees.

But nominal relations between the government and Rome were continued until the papal nuncio and the archbishop were expelled in 1876. The 27th of April is the anniversary of the beginning of Guzman Blanco's reign, and it was formerly the custom to celebrate that day with great ceremonies. In 1876 he ordered Archbishop Guevara to sing a *Te Deum* at the cathedral to open the festivities, and the latter refused to do so. He could not bring himself to utter a song of thanksgiving that so bitter an enemy of the church as Guzman Blanco had come into power, especially when the prisons were full of good Catholics, and instead of obeying the Dictator's orders he closed and barred the doors of the cathedral. This made Guzman very angry, and he expelled the archbishop from the country. The

papal nuncio went to the palace to protest, and Guzman told him that he might go too. Then Guzman sent his famous message to Congress, a document which doubtless gave him greater fame than any other he ever wrote. In this he said :

“I have taken upon myself the responsibility of declaring the Church of Venezuela independent of the Roman Episcopate, and ask that you further order that parish priests shall be elected by the people, the bishop by the rectors of the parish, and the archbishops by Congress, returning to the uses of the primitive church founded by Jesus Christ and his apostles. Such a law will not only resolve the clerical question, but will be besides a grand example for the Christian Church of republican America, hindered in her march towards liberty, order, and progress by the policy, always retrograde, of the Roman Church ; and the civilized world will see in this act the most characteristic and palpable sign of advance in the regeneration of Venezuela.

“GUZMAN BLANCO.”

To this the Congress replied :

“Faithful to our duties, faithful to our convictions, and faithful to the holy dogmas of the religion of Jesus Christ, of that great Being who conserved the world’s freedom with His blood, we do not hesitate to emancipate the Church of Venezuela from that episcopacy which pretends, as an infallible and omnipotent power, to absorb from Rome the vitality of a free people, the beliefs of our conscience, and the noble aspirations and destinies which pertain to us as component parts of the great human family. Congress offers your excellency and will give you all the aid you seek to preserve the honor and the right of our na-

tion, and announces now, with patriotic pleasure, that it has already begun to elaborate the law which your excellency asks it to frame."

This declaration of independence caused a great sensation all over Spanish America. It was the first official repudiation of the authority of Rome by any of the republics, although several of them have since followed the example of Venezuela. And until now the relations between the government and the head of the church have not been renewed.

The fashionable churches of Caracas are dedicated to Nuestra Señora de la Merced (the Blessed Mother of Mercy) and to Santa Teresa. The former is the most modern and recent ecclesiastical structure in the city, and the only one in which architectural rules and proportions have been regarded. Being situated in the new portion of the town, where the residences of the wealthy people are, it is attended by most of the aristocracy. Years ago, before Caracas was modernized, there used to be a very pretty custom in vogue at this church.

The Mother of Mercy is the patron saint of maidens, and all over Spanish America her anniversary is celebrated by them. In some places processions of young girls march to the church on her day and decorate it with lilies, the flowers that have been chosen as the ideal of purity. At other places it is a beautiful custom for brides, the evening before their marriage, to kneel before the altar of Santa Mercedes, and supplicate the blessing of the immaculate mother. And again, elsewhere on the anniversary of this saint, young girls are in the habit of writing letters, as children in the Northern countries write to Santa Claus before Christmas, telling her what presents they want—dolls and new

dressess and sweetmeats. These letters are laid upon her altar by the maidens and returned to their parents by the priests, so that the petitions may be answered. These customs are no longer observed in Caracas, but are still found in some of the interior towns, and there is nearly always a church to this popular saint in every place of size.

Santa Teresa is situated at the opposite end of the city, and has a portion of the aristocracy among its attendants. This is the church which Guzman Blanco's family attended when they were in the city, and he worshipped there when he worshipped at all, which was not often. It is there, too, that he appears among the apostles, as Napoleon I. does among the saints and martyrs whose statues crown the minarets of the great cathedral at Milan. Napoleon furnished the money to complete that, the most beautiful building in the world, and the builders honored him by giving him a niche.

Santa Teresa is the only church that Guzman repaired during his long administration. He spent a good deal of money upon it, extending its walls and erecting a considerable addition, in the vestibule of which appears the inevitable tablet, inscribed as follows :

The Illustrious American,  
GENERAL GUZMAN BLANCO,  
directed the extension of this temple,  
April 3, 1873.

At the other end of the church is a second tablet embedded in the wall, which reads :

Basilica de Santa Anna.  
Erected and decorated by  
The Illustrious American,  
GENERAL GUZMAN BLANCO,  
and dedicated during his administration,  
April 27, 1880.

There are many benevolent institutions in Caracas, asylums and hospitals, well managed and well supported by charity and subsidies from the treasury. The general hospital, La Casa de Beneficencia, is one of the best in all South America. All cemeteries are called Campo Santa—sacred field. Throughout the city, in all the churches, hotels, and public buildings, attached to the outer walls of houses upon the most frequented thoroughfares, are iron boxes for charitable contributions, which are inscribed :

God blesses the hands that drop alms here for the sick and poor.

The hospitals and other institutions of charity have for many years been conducted by persons appointed by the president or the minister of education, who has them under his charge, and such places have ordinarily been used to reward political services; but when Rojas-Paul was president he decided to introduce a reform in this respect, and sent Amenodoro Irdancta, editor of the Catholic weekly paper called *El Iris de la Fe* ("The Rainbow of the Faith"), to Spain and Rome to secure the services of a company of Sisters of Charity. A contract was made with them to take charge of the public benevolent institutions at a given price for a term of ten years, and they were the first nuns seen in the country since Guzman Blanco expelled the religious orders in 1873.

Since he drove out the monks at that time the priests have been educated at the National University, supported by the government, where the doctrine of infallibility has been repudiated; but the Catholic organ alluded to above, and some of the secular papers which lean towards the Clerical Party, have been advocating the importation of orthodox professors for this school from Rome and foreign priests for the churches. This looks like a restoration of

the church to its former influence, but it is not popular among the people, especially the educated men and the intellectual coterie who compose the directorate and the faculties of the University.

Notwithstanding the powerful influence of the priests, they are the objects of ridicule and derision. Most of the cartoons in the comic papers are directed at their faults and foibles, and the wits of the country make them the targets of their humor. Three funny anecdotes out of five in the ordinary newspaper will refer to parish padres. They wear long black robes, which hang to their heels and are bound at the waist with a girdle, and black-silk scoop-shovel hats, which in the United States are only seen upon the comic-opera stage. The students in the theological school of the University adopt this costume when they are matriculated, and continue to wear it wherever they go, even on vacation, as the young officers of the army always appear in uniform, whether on or off duty. The Bishop of Caracas goes about the city in his purple robes, and is generally attended by his private secretary or some companion. He never appears alone, even when he is walking.

The Church of San Francisco, an odd-shaped structure which adjoins the University on the east, and was the chapel of the monks who formerly occupied that building, has recently been restored and put in good order at public expense. At this church the army is required to attend mass once a week, by order of the president. After early dress parade on Sunday morning the troops in the garrison at Caracas are marched down in uniform, with their swords and their guns, to perform religious duties.

Here also was recently resurrected an effigy of the Saviour, to which is attributed miraculous powers. The casket is made of tortoise-shell, beautifully carved and set in solid silver,

with panels of plate-glass through which the image can be seen. It was formerly a much-revered object of worship, and the source of considerable revenue for the priests, who played upon the superstitions of the people, and taught them to believe that it would heal disease and relieve distress provided offerings of value were made and vows said. Guzman Blanco, who hated such sixteenth-century notions, stopped the proceedings and ordered the image out of the church.

There is another effigy in the same church which is also said to have miraculous power—an image of Nuestra Señora de la Soledad. It is a copy of one that stands in a church at Seville, Spain, and was ordered by a rich Venezuelan named Don Juan del Coro. It was shipped on board a galleon, which, while crossing the Atlantic, was caught in a terrible gale, and this image, with other parts of the cargo, was cast overboard to lighten her. A few days before the ship reached La Guayra some men who were working on the shore found a box that appeared to have been cast up by the sea. Upon opening it they discovered a marble statue of the Blessed Virgin, which they took to town. When the captain arrived he identified it as the one he had thrown overboard in the middle of the Atlantic a few weeks before, and was so amazed at the miracle that he at once fell upon his knees, asked pardon for his manifold sins, and became a priest, although he had been a desperate character before. Don Juan del Coro, who had ordered and paid for the image, also identified it. It was taken to Caracas and lifted to the altar of the Church of San Francisco, where it has since remained.

There is still another miracle-working image in this city which has an even more curious history. A young peas-



ant, having been unjustly accused of crime, fled to the mountains, and there prayed earnestly to the Blessed Virgin of Consolation that she would intercede in his behalf, and protect him from being punished for another man's offences. After a while he noticed upon the ground before him a flat stone, which appeared to bear upon its surface a picture of the mother of God. He picked it up, offered his prayers to it, and then, feeling that he was safe, returned to the city, carrying the stone with him, which he gave to a woman who had kindly offered him shelter and food. He pointed out to her the likeness to the Blessed Virgin, but at first she could not see it. She placed the stone upon the altar in her chamber, however, and every day by some miraculous agency the lines grew deeper until the representation was complete. The peon, upon his return, learned that the guilty man had been detected, and, strangely enough, at the identical moment that he had found the stone.

This image now sits upon an altar in a private house in Caracas, surrounded by gifts of great value, and is visited daily by people who are ill or in distress. They believe that by bringing votive offerings and making prayers this Virgin gives them miraculous relief. If they are not relieved, it is because their offerings are not of sufficient value. If they give all they have the failure is due to lack of faith.

Passing along the country roads in Venezuela you will see rudely painted inscriptions over the entrances to the houses, which read like this :

"La Patrona de esta casa es Nuestra Señora de la Merced," or

"La Patrona de esta casa es Nuestra Señora de la Inmaculada Concepcion," or

"El Patron de esta casa es San Juan de Baptista."

These mean that the patron saint of those who dwell within is "the Blessed Lady of Mercy," or "the Blessed Lady of the Immaculate Conception," or "St. John the Baptist."

The public men of the country are ready to encourage and sustain Protestantism, not from any religious convictions of their own, but because they see the retarding influences of the Catholic Church in the development of the country. The priests from the beginning have stood in the way of progress, have opposed modern innovations, and have been particularly antagonistic to the educational system. The tendency of the schools and the educated men of the country has been towards materialism for the last twenty years. Nearly every one of the professors in the University is an agnostic, or at least a materialist, and their influence is great. The men of the country, excepting the peasants, do not attend church except upon special occasions; and while they assent to it, many do not believe in the Catholic faith. The immorality of the priests and their questionable practices will not permit an intelligent man to do so; but the common people, the masses, are intensely religious and superstitious. Whatever may be the policy of the government towards the Vatican, nothing can shake them from the faith in which they were born, or impair their reverence for the often dissolute and nearly always ignorant padres of their parishes. Therefore, the work of Protestant missionaries must necessarily be among the educated classes—among the men who reason. There is in Venezuela a most inviting field for clergymen of education and intellectual force who can speak the Spanish language, and the same conditions exist throughout the country. It is a wonder to me that the missionary organizations in the United States do not occupy it. A dozen

churches might be organized in Venezuela at once, and within a few years every one of them would be self-sustaining. The American colony at Caracas would readily contribute at least one hundred dollars a month at once to the support of a settled pastor, and in time this would be doubled, without a doubt.

Freemasonry was introduced into the country by Guzman Blanco, who with several of his retinue was initiated at New York when he visited that city in 1882, and has since taken several degrees. There are now two lodges, with about a thousand members, in Caracas. The Dictator, who never did things by halves, presented them with a handsome temple, which has become the centre of much influence, political as well as social and commercial—quite as great as the Club Union, a social organization of considerable exclusiveness.

## CHAPTER XVII

### ALONG THE SPANISH MAIN

THE country along the Spanish Main, from Trinidad to the isthmus, is a mixture of Florida and Switzerland, where one can find within a single day's journey any climate or scene to suit his taste, from a tropical jungle swarming with tigers and alligators to mountain-crests crowned with eternal snow. Down in the southwestern part of Venezuela and eastern Colombia the Andes Mountains and the twin range, the Cordilleras, forming a double spinal column for the continent, split and scatter, and finally jump into the sea. At the very edge of the ocean, within plain view from the decks of passing vessels, rise peaks which reach above the clouds, whose snow-capped summits seem to hang in the air. One of them, the Nevada de la Santa Marta, is 17,500 feet high, and affords one of the most impressive pictures that can be imagined. The tourist is always incredulous when the peak is pointed out to him, for its shape is so much like a bank of clouds; but you are finally compelled to admit the truth of geography, for clouds do not stand transfixed in the sky, unchangeable and immovable, like this phenomenon.

Between these mountains, along the coast, are narrow valleys of the most luxurious tropical verdure and the richest soil, which yield three harvests annually, and are densely populated.

In one of them, about three days' journey from Caracas, lies the beautiful city of Valencia and the remarkable lake of the same name, near which was fought the battle of Carabobo, which marked the end of monarchical power on the northern coast of South America. A monument commemorating this, the final fight in the war for independence, was recently erected in Valencia, and dedicated with impressive ceremonies. The wagon-road from Caracas to Valencia crosses the mountains, and the scenery is very fine. One of the towns to be visited is Victoria, where Bolivar at one time lived, and where many relics of him may be seen. There is a diligence from Caracas, or one may hire his own conveyance, or go on horseback, which is by far the most comfortable and enjoyable way. The Venezuelan horses are trained to an easy gait, and one can remain in the saddle half a day without becoming as tired as he would be after an hour's experience with one of our rough, slipping steeds.

A railway is now under construction, by a German syndicate, from Caracas to Valencia, passing to the northward of the lake, and an English company is constructing a line around its southern shores which will run almost parallel to the other road for most of the distance between the two cities. When the tracks are laid it will be only a short day's ride. These roads will open to commerce one of the richest districts in Venezuela, which is now sparsely settled, but is capable of sustaining an enormous population and producing unlimited tons of coffee, cocoa, and sugar. Liberal inducements are offered by the government to colonies and individual settlers; lands are given free, and a small amount of money monthly to sustain the immigrant until his first crop can be harvested.

Although the overland route to Valencia presents the

greatest attraction to the tourist and the lover of sublime scenery, business men and others who are in haste go by sea, for the latter journey is less expensive, and can be made by night. One can leave Caracas by the railroad at three o'clock in the afternoon, and every two or three days in the week find a steamer at La Guayra. He can dine on board, and the next morning enter the beautiful, historic old harbor of Puerto Cabello, from which the ride by rail to Valencia is only thirty miles. The harbor is called El Golfo Triste (The Gulf of Tears), because in olden times it was frequently visited by terrible scourges, and the bottom of the bay is said to be literally covered with the bones of those who have been heaved overboard for lack of a better place to bury them. The ghost of that most famous of all freebooters, Sir Francis Drake, haunts the place, for he died here of yellow-fever. But there is less danger of fever there now, for the swamps that used to surround the city have been drained, and sanitary precautions have been introduced which make it one of the healthiest places on the coast.

The place is called Puerto Cabello (the Port of the Hair), on the pretence that ships are so safe in its harbor as to be tied with a single hair to their moorings. This is somewhat exaggerated, but nevertheless the harbor is the best on the Spanish Main, and has such abrupt banks that a vessel can be run up against the shore anywhere to take on her cargo. The frowning old fortress that guards the entrance to the harbor is of ancient date, having been constructed by the Spaniards three centuries ago to protect the ships and the city against the raids of the pirates that haunted the Spanish Main. At the beginning of the war for independence Simon Bolivar, then only twenty-six years old, was placed in command of this fort by General Miranda,

and under his charge were nearly all the arms and ammunition that had been accumulated by the revolutionists, as well as two thousand prisoners. Among the latter were many of the Spanish colonial officials and leading citizens of the country who sympathized with the king. Bolivar had but a small garrison of young and inexperienced men like himself, and one of them, turning traitor, released the prisoners, who quickly seized the arms and overcame their guards. Bolivar made his escape almost miraculously. Dropping into the bay, he swam ashore, and made his way to a hacienda or plantation near the city, where he was concealed for several weeks. This was a sad blow to the patriots, and postponed independence for several years.

Puerto Cabello is a busy place, and the second port in commerce in Venezuela. It has about 7000 inhabitants, who are all engaged in the counting-rooms of the exporters and importers, in the warehouses, and upon the docks. Steamships of eight different lines visit the place regularly, making about four or five arrivals and departures every week, and there is direct communication with England, France, Germany, Holland, and the United States, as well as with the West India islands and the ports along the Spanish Main. Many sailing-vessels come here also from all parts of the world laden with supplies for the large area in the interior, of which this is the entrepot, and carry away cargoes of coffee. The latter is the staple of the country, and about fifteen million pounds are shipped annually from Puerto Cabello. The stores are large, and filled with every possible variety of goods, but the business is controlled by a few houses. There are some pleasant residences, a pretty park, and an interesting market, but most people prefer to live at Valencia, or in the suburban towns that lie upon the mountain's breast.

San Esteban, a suburban village six miles away in the foot-hills, is one of the loveliest of places, and is reached by a comfortable carriage-road. It is composed mostly of German families, who have comfortable and picturesque villas surrounded by luxuriant tropical foliage and forests of monstrous trees.

The railroad to Valencia belongs to an English corporation. Until it was open to traffic the people were in the habit of sending all their merchandise between the seaport and the interior in ox-carts or upon the backs of burros—patient little donkeys who bear bigger loads than Bunyan's Pilgrim, and never murmur. Travellers were compelled to use the same mode of transportation. Strange as it may appear, many prefer to do so still. Rather than patronize the railroad and ride for an hour and a half in a comfortable car, they will rise at five o'clock in the morning, mount a miserable little donkey, and ride all day long through clouds of dust and under a burning sun, reach Puerto Cabello in a condition of complete exhaustion sometime about midnight, and take the steamer next day. The reader will exclaim, "What fools!" and ask why. The only explanation is that stubborn adherence to custom that marks the Spanish-American race. Of course the educated people do not do this. They welcomed the railroad, and did everything in their power to encourage its construction; but among the common people there is persistent antagonism to all innovations. They want to do as their fathers and grandfathers did, and ask no better accommodations or greater conveniences. Some of them, too, are afraid of the cars. They do not like to travel so swiftly. In order to familiarize them with the railroad, and accustom them to its use, the manager gave a series of free excursions from Valencia to Puerto Cabello and return every Sunday, and



carried without charge as many as were willing to go. At first the trains were very light, but those who had the audacity to attempt the experiment brought back such favorable reports that later the cars were crowded, and the people began to use them for business as well as pleasure.

But the old fogies still shake their heads ominously, and look with suspicion upon such new-fangled inventions as locomotives and passenger-cars. And long trains of carts and burros pass up and down the wagon-road daily, for there are many merchants who still prefer to send their freight that way, although the railroad rates are lower.

Valencia is the prettiest city in Venezuela, and is beginning to show signs of progress. It has the best hotel in the republic, two well-patronized telephone companies, and is now lighted with electricity. All of these improvements have been introduced by citizens of the United States. The cathedral is much more imposing than that at Caracas, and its graceful towers rise from a mass of foliage like shafts of alabaster.

The climate, like that of Caracas, is salubrious—a perpetual spring. During the hours of noon the sun is oppressive, and the people use them for rest, dividing their sleep into two portions; but the morning air is cool and invigorating, and every afternoon a breeze springs up which fans the heated walls and renews the life of all animated nature. There is no city in all the tropics more beautiful than Valencia or more picturesquely situated. The mountains that surround it are massive and sublime, and the soil of the valleys they enclose is said to be the richest in the world.

An iron rod has been driven down sixty feet through the black loam without touching bottom, and the quality of the soil may be judged by the fact that sugar-cane planta-

tions yield sixty harvests without a renewal of the plants. The extreme depth and richness of the soil is due to the fact that this valley within the last five centuries was entirely covered by the lake, and received the loose soil of the mountain-sides which was swept off by the heavy rains and streams.

The Lake of Valencia, called Lago de Tacarigua in local parlance, is one of the most remarkable of natural phenomena, and to it the famous Humboldt devoted much study when he visited Venezuela in the early part of this century. Its waters have decreased with great rapidity since the settlement of the country by the Spaniards. Then the city was founded upon its banks, but it continued to recede, as it had been doing for centuries before, and at the time of Humboldt's visit in 1810 its shores were three miles from the cathedral. Now they are six miles away. Humboldt makes the entire length of the lake thirty miles; now it is only twenty-three, and to the list of islands he described seven have been added, which the receding waters have laid bare during the last eighty years. But the lake has a queer trick of swelling during the wet season, and growing smaller again when the rains cease.

The country back of Valencia is practically uninhabited, and portions of it are unexplored. To the westward along the coast, at frequent intervals, are little towns and mines of silver and copper, but no places of importance until Maracaibo is reached. This is a city of some thirty thousand inhabitants on the borders of the lake of the same name, to which the "Red D" company runs a small steamer to connect at Caracas with their New York line, making the passage in twenty-four hours.

Lake Maracaibo is entered from the Gulf of Venezuela by a strait some twenty miles long and from five to ten miles

wide, which is a part of itself. From where it broadens, near the city, the lake is about a hundred miles long north and south, and nearly seventy miles wide in its widest part. By the rivers from Colombia and by mule-roads to the lake a large transportation business is kept up through the lake to Maracaibo, augmented by the aid of native productions from the numerous points of water tributary from Venezuela.

Among the noteworthy public buildings are the Palace of the Governor, the Federal College Building, the custom-house, the court-house or palace of justice, the public market, several churches, a theatre, etc. There are about ten miles of street railways, two telephone companies, an electric-light plant, several benevolent institutions, orphan asylums, a bank, and other establishments of note and worth, so that the city is not behind its sisters in evidences of cultivation, convenience, and progress.

Strangers, particularly visitors from the United States, are always welcomed with cordial hospitality in Venezuela, and if they come well introduced are at once admitted to the homes of the best people. Many of the Caraqueñians, as the citizens of Caracas are called, have been educated in the United States and found wives there, so that the American colony is large and flourishing.

Beyond Maracaibo is the town of Santa Marta, behind which rises the Nevada peak, the tallest on the Caribbean coast. Santa Marta is the most easterly port of Colombia. It was there that Bolivar took refuge when Paez drove him into exile, and there he died. Back of Santa Marta in the mountains is a town famous only for its name. There are two cities named Santa Tomas in Colombia, and this one was always loyal to the Spanish crown through the twenty-seven years of revolution. Therefore, with indignant irony,

the Spaniards distinguished it from the other place by calling it Santa Tomas de la Cabelleros (St. Thomas the Gentleman).

The voyage along the Spanish Main to Aspinwall is pleasant and interesting, but one cares to see but little of the latter place, for it is continually haunted by the Chagres fever, is filled with the most degraded men and women on earth of all races and conditions, and few people live there who are not compelled to do so. You can take a steam-launch and ride to the excavations of the De Lesseps canal, see where millions of money have been wasted, and realize at a single glance that the greatest artificial work ever attempted on earth will never be completed in this generation, or any other, for that matter; and then you can take a drive along the beach and see the alligators, but there is little else of interest. Steamers leave for New York once a week, and you can go across to New Orleans in five days, but the ships that take that route are not so comfortable as those on the former.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE VALLEY OF THE ORINOCO

THERE is no convenient way of getting from Caracas to the Orinoco country except by sea. Of course one can "cut across lots," and many people, armies indeed, have gone that way; but it is a long, tedious, and difficult journey, and dangerous at times, because of the mountains to be climbed, the forests to be penetrated, the rivers to be forded, and the trackless swamps. To a naturalist the trip is full of fascinations, for the trail leads through a region prolific with rare and curious forms of vegetable and animal life. There are plants and flowers and trees that are scarcely found elsewhere, birds of gorgeous plumage, animals and fish unknown to other latitudes, and all of them abounding in virgin forest, where the soil has seldom been defaced by the footprints of men.

There is one remarkable fish, peculiar to the Orinoco valley, I believe—a small but fierce fellow called the *carib*, because of its resemblance to that most savage of Indian tribes. It is no bigger than the perch of Northern waters, but its teeth will penetrate a coat of mail, and natives who attempt to ford or bathe in the streams are often killed by it. The caribs are caught in a curious way—by crushing the leaves of the *barbaco*, a highly narcotic plant, and then strewing them in the water. The juice stupefies the fish, although it does not injure them, and as they float about

upon the surface the Indians pick them out with their hands.

Most people imagine that the so-called electric-eel is a myth, or at least an artificial contrivance; but it is not so. The tributaries of the Orinoco furnish them, about the size and weight of the ordinary variety the boys of New England catch with night lines, which if touched give a shock like a galvanic battery, often so violent that their victims have been temporarily paralyzed, and, losing control of their muscles, have been drowned. Horses and cattle suffer as men do, so that the *llaneros* are careful to keep their animals out of streams that are supposed to be haunted by this curious snake. During one of the early wars in Venezuela an entire army was almost disabled by running into a school of electric-eels while fording a stream.

To reach Ciudad Bolivar, formerly known as Angostura, is neither difficult nor expensive, and, aside from the heat, the journey is comfortable. It is like going from New York to Memphis by sea, however, although not so great a distance. There are no native means of transportation, but you can take any of the English, French, or German steamers, and they are usually leaving La Guayra as often as twice a week, to Port-of-Spain, on the British island of Trinidad.

The voyageur who enters from any direction the Port-of-Spain is bound to witness some picturesque scenery, and the mind of a person who is not familiar with the tropics will be profoundly impressed. The precipitous coast, clothed in most sumptuous foliage, affords a magnificent panorama. It looks cool and inviting, and the traveller, enervated by the tropic air, imagines that he would linger at Trinidad forever; but he soon changes his purpose when he goes ashore, unless he likes his pleasure roasted.

A glance at the map shows that Trinidad is the largest of the group of Windward Islands, which lie in a long procession from St. Thomas, the key-stone of the arch, to the mouths of the Orinoco. They are also called the Lesser Antilles, to distinguish them from the northern and western group, which includes Cuba, Hayti, and Porto Rico. Where the coast of Terra Firma, as the ancients termed the Southern Continent, turns the corner two horns project from Venezuela which almost touch the island of Trinidad and enclose a considerable sea known as the Gulf of Paria. The two passages are called *bocas*, or mouths. That from the Atlantic is known as La Boca de Mona, or the Monkey's Mouth; that from the other side is known as the Dragon's Mouth. It will also be observed that owing to that loyal and fertile colony the British hold the key to the navigation of the Orinoco, and in case of a war for the possession of the valley of that great river Trinidad will be a scene of activity.

The two chief towns of Trinidad, San Fernando and Port-of-Spain, are situated upon a bay, the latter being much the larger, and the political and commercial capital of the colony. Trinidad is really a fragment of the continent, broken off by some terrestrial convulsion and gradually separated by erosion from the water of the Orinoco River, whose delta covers a distance of six hundred miles. The island was christened by Columbus, who reached its shores in 1498, after being buffeted by winds and waves, detained by calms for several months, and reduced to the utmost extremity. Only one small cask of fresh water remained on the ship, and the sailors had been on half-rations for some time. The heat of the "doldrums," as a belt of windless area along the equator is called, where the vessel had been lying becalmed, had opened the seams, and it was

leaking so badly that two-thirds of the men were kept continually at the pumps. It was the morning of Trinity Sunday when the island was first seen, and the pious old discoverer knelt upon the sand and consecrated it with prayer to the three persons of the Godhead, to whom he attributed his salvation. Here Columbus and his shipmates found much-needed rest and were able to repair their craft, using the natural pitch of the island to calk the seams.

As Trinidad is approached the clear, bright blue of the water of the sea is obscured by the sediment from the Orinoco, and it becomes the color of chocolate. Passing through the Dragon's Mouth, the steamer enters the beautiful Gulf of Paria, the great embouchure of the Orinoco, itself a mighty harbor, ninety miles long by forty miles wide, completely land-locked, and shallow enough for a ship to anchor anywhere. On one side are the low plains of Trinidad, covered with glistening cane, while on the other rise the mountains of Cumana, rugged, mysterious, and impenetrable, clothed from top to bottom with immense trees and crowned with wreaths of vapor. Here is the end of the great chain of the Andes, the spinal column of the Southern Continent, which, when it reaches the Isthmus of Darien, turns to the eastward and follows the line of coast so closely that the passing ships can often see the snow-banks on the mountain summits when far out at sea.

Port-of-Spain, with about twenty-five thousand inhabitants, has a poor harbor, or rather no harbor at all; for ships have to anchor fully a mile from the shore, and the freight that reaches and leaves the port has to be transported in lighters. It is a nasty place, full of vultures, which sit like evil spirits upon the house-tops and feed upon the refuse that is cast into the streets; but it is said that they are the most important and industrious of all the inhabitants, for



without them, lacking any system of sewerage, the city would suffer from a perpetual plague. The ground as well as the air is full of loathsome creatures, vermin of all kinds, tarantulas, scorpions, centipedes, serpents, lizards, vampires, and chigoes, or "jiggers," as they call little worms that harbor in the cracks of the tile floors, and bore into the feet of those who walk about barefooted, producing painful and often dangerous ulcers. Like most of the cities in South America, Port-of-Spain has straight, level streets, badly paved, with lines of low houses without architectural pretensions, evil smells, swarms of dogs, chickens, goats, and naked children. One is struck at once with the number of people who seem to have nothing to do, and is not surprised when told that there are at least five thousand beings in the city without visible means of support. They are too lazy to work, but always seem to be eating something, generally fruit, which is as cheap and plenty as dirt; and when they are not eating, like the burglar who "is not burgling," they "lie a-basking in the sun."

But only man is vile. Nature made the island a paradise, and one turns from the disgusting sights of the city to feast his eyes upon the luxurious foliage and the gorgeous flowers. The botanic garden which stands in the outskirts of the town contains an example of nearly every tropical plant in the very highest stage of development—a wilderness of vegetable wonders; and over all stands the royal palm with leaves like ostrich plumes, twenty or thirty feet long, sleeping until a breeze awakens them, when they nod with movements of grace that no artificial thing can be made to imitate. The trees of this garden and all the forests of the island are alive with monkeys and birds of brilliant plumage.

The island is covered with sugar plantations, most of

them owned by Englishmen and worked by coolie labor. Port-of-Spain, owing to its situation at the mouth of the Orinoco—for most of the steamers upon that river enter the northern delta—is a place of commercial importance and activity, having a large trade with European and American ports, and being the entrepot for goods destined for the Orinoco country. There are a few fine business houses and some comfortable residences. The Government House is a spacious mansion, and there are also two cathedrals worth notice, one of which belongs to the Church of England and the other to the Church of Rome.

San Fernando, thirty miles from Port-of-Spain, has a population of eight or ten thousand people, in the centre of the agricultural district, and furnishes the visitor with a very fair idea of an East India settlement, for most of the inhabitants are coolies, who live in bamboo houses like tame beasts, without comforts or conveniences, and work under contract upon the sugar plantations near by.

The most interesting place in Trinidad is the famous Pitch Lake from which comes the world's supply of asphaltum. It covers ninety-nine acres, and contains millions of tons of pitch, which never grows less in amount, for that taken out during the day is renewed by nature every night. In the neighborhood of this Stygian pool the air is heavy with sickening odors, and the surrounding country is covered with its overflow, so that the earth is as hard as the pavements of Washington; but neither the steam and fumes that arise from the pitch roasting in the sun nor the asphaltum in the soil seem to injure vegetation, for flowers and fruits actually grow in the midst of them, and pineapples are there brought to the greatest perfection. The lake is a floating mass of asphaltum, seamed by narrow channels of clear water, with a few straggling islands covered with

thin, low shrubs. At the centre, the fountain of all the foulness, the pitch is at boiling heat, and covered with yellow and white sulphurous foam, upon which are floating innumerable bubbles filled with loathsome gas. The old proverb that one may not touch pitch without being defiled does not hold good here, for this substance will not stick to the hands, and you can take up a chunk and mould it like clay without soiling your fingers. The supply for shipment is chopped from the surface, where it has been hardened and dried by the evaporation of the moisture; but, like ice on the ponds of the frozen zones, the quantity cut away during the day is always replaced during the night, for some action of nature keeps forcing the nasty substance out of the earth.

The Pitch Lake is a mystery which scientists have discussed for many years. Sir Walter Raleigh wrote the first account of it in 1595, when he landed there on his voyage in search of the El Dorado and the land of the Amazons. Humboldt gave a good deal of study to the phenomenon, and declared that the Pitch Lake is "a constantly aggregating mass formed from the cosmical gaseous fluid," which seems to settle it.

A few miles away is a mud-volcano, on the mountain of San Fernando, called Salse—a circular pile of mud some two or three acres in extent, bottomless and hot, and evidently occupying some old crater. The mud is heaped up in piles like monstrous ant-hills, at the top of which are holes through which the moist stuff oozes, and sometimes flames are said to appear. The contents of this basin are really impure asphaltum, for the odor is the same as that about the Pitch Lake and the component parts are similar, but the greater quantity of earth in the mixture makes it worthless for economical purposes.

Everybody has heard the joke about oysters growing on trees, but this anomaly may be actually found in Trinidad, where the roots of the mangrove run through the banks of the cliffs into the water, and the oysters, in the absence of rocks, cling to them, and are plucked off like fruit. The oysters are small and coppery when eaten raw, like those of Belgium and Portugal, but they make a pretty good stew.

Near Trinidad is the island of Tobago, erroneously claimed by the inhabitants to be the place where Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday had their prolonged picnic. It is true that a Spanish pirate was cast away upon this island under circumstances very similar to those described in the first chapter of that fascinating story, but the description of Mr. Crusoe's surroundings as given in the book does not at all correspond with the topography of the place; and even if this were not so, Daniel De Foe, the author, has left on record the confession that the most widely read novel ever published was based upon the adventures of Alexander Selkirk, a Scotch sailor, who lived for four years and four months on the island of Juan Fernandez, off the coast of Chili. The manner in which Mr. Selkirk was left in the situation described was not such as to do him credit, as he had been guilty of mutiny upon the bark *Cinque Ports*, and was given his choice between walking the plank and being marooned. He chose the latter alternative, and after being on the island a few days discovered a Mosquito Indian, who had been accidentally left ashore a few weeks previously by an English privateer. The Indian, whose name was Robin, was the man Friday of the story.

The Spaniard who was cast away on Tobago was always in sight of the settlement of Trinidad, and by maintaining

a large fire attracted the attention of the inhabitants of the latter island, who rescued him. But it will not do in that neighborhood to deny the correctness of the local tradition that Robinson Crusoe was the first settler of the place.

At least once a week, and generally twice, a steamer leaves Port-of-Spain for the upper Orinoco. The fare is thirty dollars, including stateroom and meals, or fifty dollars for a round-trip ticket. The time required to make the journey depends upon the season of the year and the condition of the river. If you are going during the rainy season—that is, from the 1st of May to the 1st of November—you can reach Ciudad Bolivar in three days; but during the dry season, when the river is low, navigation is slow and difficult because of snags, bars, and other obstructions. The steamers are of American make, side-wheelers, owned by an American company, and manned by citizens of the United States. At Ciudad Bolivar the traveller shifts his baggage to a smaller craft, similar to those that ply the Ohio, Tennessee, and other streams of the United States, and starts onward for the head of navigation, wherever that may be.

It is possible to go within two days' journey, on mule-back, of Bogota, the capital of Colombia, by taking the Meta, one of the chief affluents of the Orinoco, and, by passing southward through the Cassiquiare, the Amazon can be reached. Few people are aware that a boat entering the mouth of the Orinoco can emerge again into the sea through the Amazon without leaving the water. This passage is not navigable for steamers because of rapids and obstructions, but it might be made clear at an expense that would be very slight in comparison with the advantages gained. Indeed, the Emperor of Brazil once gave a concession to an Englishman to open this channel, and the lat-

ter was to have the exclusive right to navigate the waters for a term of twenty-five years as a reward for his enterprise, but for some reason or other the contract was not carried out. The government of Colombia has granted to a syndicate of Frenchmen a guaranteed concession to construct a railway from Bogota to the head of navigation of the Meta, which will give an easier and less expensive outlet for the produce of the country than is offered by the Magdalena, which flows entirely through the territory of that republic. And there is already a Frenchman at the sources of the Meta, two days from Bogota, who sends flat-boats loaded with hides, coffee, cocoa, and other produce down the river every week.

Another branch goes nearly to Quito, the capital of Ecuador, and in fact its affluents are so numerous and so large that in all the 500,000 square miles of territory drained by the Orinoco there is scarcely a point more than three or four days' journey by mule from navigable waters, and there are said to be 430 navigable branches of the river.

From the Atlantic to the Andes, from the chain of the Cordilleras that hugs the coast of the Caribbean to the legend-haunted Sierra de la Parima, there is an area as large as the valley of the Mississippi, and similar in its configuration, capable of producing mighty crops of nearly everything the world feeds on, and affording grazing ground for millions upon millions of cattle. From the foot-hills of the mountains, in which are the sources of the river, 2000 miles to the sea, are great plains, or *llanos*, like those of Iowa and Illinois, almost entirely destitute of timber except along the courses of the rivers, where valuable trees are found. During the rainy season the immediate banks of the Orinoco are overflowed, and the differ-

ence between high and low water is sixty feet. At a distance of 500 miles from the ocean the river is three miles wide, and at Ciudad Bolivar, 240 miles from the sea, it is four and a half miles wide and 360 feet deep. Some remarkable rapids in the upper part of the river, called the Maypures and the Atures, are formed by innumerable little cascades succeeding each other like steps, at a point where the islands and rocks so restrict the bed of the river that the channel is only twenty feet wide, although just beyond them the great stream stretches to a width of 8000 feet. The volume of water between these rocks is said to be 120 feet in depth.

The upper Orinoco has never been thoroughly explored. Baron von Humboldt as long ago as 1808 made a journey along its course, and contributed the first accurate knowledge the world had of that portion of the continent. In 1848 he was followed by another German, Dr. Schomburgk, whose name and work are involved in the boundary controversy. He wrote the most extended and valuable treatise that exists. There are but few towns along the river, and the forests are inhabited by a race of uncivilized but peaceful Indians, who gather rubber, cocoanuts, tonqua-beans, vanilla beans, and other products of the forests, and catch the turtles from whose livers the *pâté de foie gras* of the epicures is made.

The scenery for the greater part of the voyage is uninteresting, but as you reach the upper waters and enter the foot-hills of the Andes it becomes sublime. But there steam navigation ceases, and canoes paddled by Indians are the only means of transportation that the country affords. The heat along the lower river is intense, but the boats are built so as to protect the traveller from the sun, and furnish the greatest degree of coolness possible. The

water is turgid and muddy. The banks are low, and the Orinoco, like the Missouri, often tires of its old course, and cuts a new one through fields or forests. On either side the coarse grass and reeds grow tall, and towards the end of the season are topped with tassels that nod and droop in the sun.

At daybreak long lines of pelicans and other water-birds, awakened by the breathing of the steamer, go clanging out to sea; and as morning wakens the thin blue mist that nature nightly hangs upon the river rises and leaves the slender rushes that line the banks to quiver in a burning glare. Towards noonday a breeze springs up, which is as regular and faithful as the stars. It cools the atmosphere, covers the surface of the river with pretty ripples, and makes life possible under a tropic sun. There is no twilight. The sun jumps up from below the horizon in the morning and jumps down again at night; and then, for a few moments, the sky, the river, and the savannahs are one vast rainbow, livid with colors, so spread and blended that the most unpoetic eye cannot behold it without admiration and awe.

The smaller streams are sheltered by flower-bespangled walls of forest, gay with innumerable insects and birds, while from the branches which overhang them long trailers droop and admire their own gorgeousness in nature's mirror. Majestic trees whose solitude has been undisturbed for centuries are covered with decorations that surpass the skill of art, their trunks and limbs concealed by garlands finer than were ever woven for a bride—masses of scarlet and purple orchids, orange and crimson, blue and gold—all the fantastic forms and hues with which nature bedecks her robes under the fierce suns and the fattening rains of the tropics.

The only place of real importance, the entrepot of all



commerce, the headquarters of all trade, the source of all supplies, and the political as well as the commercial capital of nearly half the republic of Venezuela is Ciudad Bolivar — or the city of Bolivar, as the English call it. It has about twelve thousand inhabitants, representing almost every nation on earth. It is built upon a clay bluff about seventy feet above high-water mark, so that it is in no danger of being swept away. During the six months of the dry season, when the water is low, most of the shipping business is transacted upon the beach. The government, with a tendency to centralize power, has concentrated at Ciudad Bolivar the civil and military authority. It has the only custom-house upon the entire Orinoco system, and practically the only courts.

The city resembles other Spanish-American towns, for they are all alike, has a number of pretty foliage-shaded squares, several rather imposing government buildings, a cathedral, a public market, a theatre, a college, and the inevitable statues of Bolivar the Liberator, and Guzman Blanco, "the Regenerator of Venezuela." The volume of business done there is enormous in proportion to the population, as it is the supply-point and the port of shipment for a large and productive area. Within the last few years the exports of gold alone have been valued at thirty-nine millions of dollars. The principal merchants are Germans, the restaurant-keepers are Italians, and the laboring classes are negroes from the West Indies or Canary Islands. Ships from all parts of the world land at the piers, and the flags of every nation may be seen floating from poles on the house-tops. The manufacture of cigars is extensive, as excellent tobacco is cultivated in the neighborhood, and in almost every household the women employ their spare time rolling the leaves into what are known in the nomenclature

of North America as "Wheeling stogas." These are used in amazing quantities by the negro roustabouts, and are sent down the river to Las Tablas, whence they are carried on mule-back one hundred and fifty miles into the interior to the mines.

The two most conspicuous features of the place are the number of smokers and the naked workmen—black, muscular fellows, who move about like fiends in Tophet, wearing nothing but breech-clouts or short pantaloons. Everybody you meet in the street has a stoga in his mouth, and through the barred windows you can see fair señoritas blowing the smoke from cigarettes through their nostrils. The merchants and clerks in the counting-houses smoke incessantly during business hours, and the shopkeepers puff away as they dole out sugar and other groceries. Grim-looking padres with long black robes and shovel-shaped hats pass leisurely along the streets with black cigars in their mouths, and even the water-carriers, with two big casks strapped to their donkeys, and the bread-peddlers, with big barrels full of loaves, imitate their example. The heat is intense, the mean temperature night and day the year round being above 90° Fahrenheit; but the town is said to be healthy, except during the dry season, when the receding waters of the river uncover a vast area of decaying vegetation, and the *calentura*, or malaria fever, abounds.

Although the richest mineral deposits in Venezuela are supposed to lie south of the Orinoco, there are successful mines in other portions of the republic producing iron, copper, gold, silver, lead, coal, asphaltum, and petroleum, and some of the best ores are closely adjacent to the coast. A recent discovery, provided expectations are realized, is likely to add to the wealth of the country. The new metal

vanadium is said to have been found in large quantities in a lead mine near Carupano. If so, the owners have a bonanza of immeasurable value.

This new metal is the most valuable in the world, platinum possibly excepted, for an ounce of it is worth a pound of gold. Vanadium is used in fastening dyes. A single grain of it will fix permanently an indefinite quantity of any color so that it is not injured by water or by exposure to the sun. It is used by manufacturers of silks, ribbons, and other fine goods, one part generally being sufficient to fasten five or six hundred parts. The metal was discovered in Pennsylvania early in the present century, but in quantities so minute that little notice was taken of it except by collectors of minerological specimens. Then a considerable deposit was found in the interior of Mexico. The discoverer, not knowing what it was, sent some to Professor Roscoe, of the University of Edinburgh, who identified it, and by chemical experiments made known its usefulness.

The most profitable gold mine in Venezuela, and one that is famous all over the world, is El Callao, situated on the borders of the disputed territory in the State of Bolivar, about one hundred and fifty miles south of the Orinoco River.

I suppose the richest gold mine ever discovered was the Consolidated Virginia, from which Mackay, Flood, O'Brien, and the other bonanza kings drew their enormous fortunes, and the richest silver deposit was at Potosi, or Cerro del Pasco—it is difficult to calculate the output of the old Spanish mines in South America—but El Callao is reckoned second to the Consolidated Virginia in the amount of gold produced, and I understand it has already yielded more "free gold" than any other ever opened. It was worked by the Indians long ago, or at least its location cor-

responds with that of a legendary deposit from which the savages of Venezuela got much of the gold taken from them by the Spaniards; but after the latter took possession of the country its existence was a matter of much doubt until four Jamaica negroes happened to run across it on a prospecting tour.

Three agreed to sell their share in the discovery to a party of Corsicans for a nominal price. The fourth negro decided to keep his interest, and has always been glad that he did so, for within the next two or three years he was able to return to his native island, where he has since lived like a nabob at the city of Kingston, the richest man in that colony. His name is Steibel. His three companions have passed out of the knowledge of men. Even their names are forgotten.

The Corsicans, when they began to realize the value of the property, sent two of their number to England, and succeeded in raising sufficient money to build a stamp-mill and introduce other necessary machinery; but they did not capitalize their company at ten or twenty millions of dollars, as is the habit in the United States, nor did they put any of their stock on the market. They issued only thirty-two shares, which were sold originally at \$2500 a share, cash, making their entire capital \$80,000. These shares have since sold for half a million dollars each, at which rate the mine would be worth \$16,000,000, but many of them are still in the possession of the original subscribers. There was a scare and a stampede among the stockholders in 1888, and the shares, which are now divided into halves and quarters, went down considerably, so that they could be bought for one or two hundred thousand dollars. This was because the miners lost "the pay shoot," and the average product, which had been 18,000 or 20,000

ounces, dropped to 5000 or 6000 ounces a month. The lode was soon after recovered, and the old dividends are being paid again; but it is doubtful if the stock ever gets back to the quotations of 1885-86, because of a lack of public confidence in the endurance of the property.

The total output since the mine passed into the hands of its present owners has been upwards of \$35,000,000, of which about \$23,000,000 has been distributed among the owners in dividends, and \$7,000,000 disbursed for machinery and operating expenses. In other words, the original subscribers, who put in \$2500, have each received as a return upon that investment more than \$600,000 per share, with more yet to come. Nearly all the stock is held in England, but most of the men employed about the mines are Americans from California. Mr. Perkins, its superintendent for several years, who retired with a large fortune, and has gone to live where he can enjoy it, was brought to Guiana from Nevada, and the present superintendent, Mr. Jennings, is also from the Pacific States.

There are other very valuable mines in the same locality, nearly all being owned by Englishmen, but managed by Americans, like El Callao. The number of Californians in the province is said to be from three to four hundred, including prospectors. Good placer mining as well as quartz is found in the same district.

It probably costs more to produce a given quantity of gold in that country than anywhere else in the world, for several reasons. In the first place, the mines are one hundred and fifty miles from the river, and everything has to be imported. Nothing whatever is produced in the neighborhood, not even a potato or a pound of beef. All supplies have to be brought from the outside, and if the steamers on the Orinoco should stop running the men at

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the mines would starve to death. Most of the supplies come from the British island of Trinidad; and in order to show its contempt for John Bull, the government of Venezuela added a discriminating duty of thirty-three per cent. upon all goods imported from English colonies; that is, when merchandise that comes from the United States pays a duty of one hundred per cent., similar articles if produced in Great Britain or any of her colonies are taxed one hundred and thirty-three per cent.

Then the government compels shippers to pay freight both ways for a considerable distance on the river. The town nearest the mines is Tumeremos, thirty miles distant, and the nearest port is Las Tablas; but the government will not establish a custom-house there, and requires all imported merchandise to be first taken to Ciudad Bolivar, three hundred miles farther up the river, where it is unloaded, removed to the custom-house, appraised, and assessed. Then, when the duty has been paid, it can be reloaded on the steamer and dropped at Las Tablas on the return voyage. Every ounce of bullion that is shipped from the mines has to go to Ciudad Bolivar for the same purpose. There is an inspector of customs at Las Tablas, but he is kept there to prevent smuggling, and to see that no goods are discharged that have not been inspected and taxed at Ciudad Bolivar. And shippers are continually imposed upon by the authorities, and annoyed with all sorts of petty exactions, which are followed by fines and penalties.

But there has been great improvement in these respects of late, and the people are greatly relieved by the abolition of monopolies. Formerly all sorts of business was subject to concessions by the government, and every branch of trade was a monopoly. Señor Fonseca, for example, had

the exclusive right to buy cattle, and therefore every steer that was killed for beef, and every hoof that was shipped out of the country, paid him tribute, which he was supposed to share with the governor.

But trade is now free, people are taking up ranches, and the cattle business is extending rapidly upon the *llanos*, as the great plains that enclose the Orinoco are called. Beef commands a high price owing to the hot climate, the lack of ice, and the difficulties of reaching market, but it is much cheaper than it ever was before.

The only monopoly that exists at present is owned by a Frenchman, who has the exclusive right to export tonqua-beans. They grow wild in the forests surrounding the Orinoco and its tributaries, and are in great demand by perfumery, soap, and drug manufacturers all over the world. They are worth about two dollars a pound in the market, although they can be bought for a little more than half that sum in Bolivar. The natives bring them into the towns along the river to trade for food, clothing, liquors, and tobacco, but all buyers are required to ship their beans to the monopolist mentioned above, and accept such prices as he is willing to pay, for no one else can export them. As a consequence there is considerable smuggling, and the Orinoco people find it to their advantage to ship their beans over the mountains to the free-traders on the Amazon.

When freight has finally reached the port of Las Tablas it has to be carted or carried on the backs of mules a distance of one hundred and fifty miles to the mines. Formerly all transportation cost ten cents a pound for this distance, but several teaming companies have been organized, and competition is so close that the tariff has dropped to three and four cents a pound. Several concessions for a railroad have been granted, and engineers estimate that it

could be easily built for two millions and a half, for the grades are easy, and there are no rivers to bridge; but the concessionaros have not been men of capital, and have obtained charters for the purpose of selling out to syndicates. A concession was once granted for this purpose to the Duke de Morny, the son-in-law of Guzman Blanco, who organized a French company, but did nothing further.

There is little immigration, and labor is scarce. Most of the miners are negroes from Jamaica, Trinidad, and other West India islands. They appear to be the only class of human beings who can endure the climate, for the land is low, and the mines are situated almost directly on the equator. The country is comparatively healthy, but the rays of the sun are intense, and until a man becomes acclimated he is easily prostrated by exposure. Wood is the only fuel, and a very poor quality costs seven dollars a cord. As soon as a railroad is constructed coal can be bought at a less expense.

Some of the mines are within and some without the territory claimed by the English, but when a concession for a railroad was originally granted, the British minister at Caracas entered a protest on the ground that it was an infringement upon the rights of Great Britain. England usually has two gun-boats upon the Orinoco, and at the first possible excuse will take possession of the entire mineral district. Such an act would be audacious and totally unjustifiable, but would be heartily welcomed by the miners, who would very much prefer an English colonial government to Venezuelan rule. I have been told by dozens of men, Americans, Germans, native Venezuelans, and representatives of other nations, that if the question were submitted to the people the decision would be almost unanimously in favor of England.



But, regardless of the preferences of the population, Great Britain has no more title to the territory she has forcibly occupied than the United States has to Manitoba or Chihuahua, and no more right to occupy the island of Barima at the mouth of the Orinoco than the jetties of the Mississippi or the islands in the harbor of New York. She had a title to the latter once, but never to the former. Nevertheless, in 1884, after the discoveries of gold, the agents of the British government invaded the Venezuelan territory, established military posts, and appointed magistrates to enforce the British colonial laws; and so the matter stands. England not only claims, but actually occupies, all of the disputed territory, and in addition to that has taken forcible possession of the islands at the mouth of the Orinoco, erected and garrisoned fortresses thereon, and keeps a couple of men-of-war constantly in the neighborhood to enforce her authority. The dispute between the two nations has never involved the ownership nor the right of navigation upon that river. On the contrary, in 1836 England conceded the title by requesting through Sir Robert Ker Porter, her minister at Caracas, that the Venezuelan government erect a light-house upon the very spot where her fort now stands. This is a matter of vital importance to all maritime nations, as the Orinoco is navigable for thousands of miles and drains one-third of the Southern Continent.

We frame laws, organize police, and establish courts to defend the weak against the strong, and protect property from being unlawfully plundered, and no honest or brave man will stand idly by while highway robbery is being committed upon his neighbor. The excuse for the interference of our government in the Samoan case was trifling compared with the reasons that exist in the seizure of Ven-

ezuelan territory by England, for beyond and outside the grounds of ordinary justice, which are sufficient, there are some selfish inducements that appeal to every business man in this country, if he would stop for a moment to study the facts and the situation.

The United States should prevent the seizure of the Guiana territory and the waters of the Orinoco for the very reason that England has seized them. The same applies to France, Germany, and other commercial nations, for if they do not protect Venezuela now they will be compelled to pay tribute to England hereafter.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE DISPUTED TERRITORY OF GUIANA

THE British colony of Guiana is a wedge-shaped territory about 250 miles long by 100 miles wide between the rivers Corentyne, which separates it from the Dutch colony of the same name, and the Essequibo, which separates it from the Republic of Venezuela. In early geographies and gazetteers, and even in the *Statistical Abstract of the Colonial and other Possessions*, an official publication of the British government, its area is given as 60,000 square miles. In 1885 the figures were increased to 76,000. The same authorities now assert that its area is 109,000 square miles, but give no explanation of the extraordinary enlargement of the territory by 33,000 square miles, which, however, is found in the argument over the boundary dispute in the Appendix.

The cultivated area of British Guiana is a narrow strip along the coast of unparalleled fertility, which has been formed upon the sandy shore by deposits of soil washed down from the interior during the floods that annually follow the wet season. It is protected by an expensive system of dams and dikes, and the cost of creating and maintaining them confines the business of agriculture to a few wealthy corporations, who employ large numbers of coolies imported from India, and produce nothing but sugar. The luxuriance of the cane is nowhere surpassed. It is cut sev-

eral times a year, and will reappear fifty and sixty years in succession without replanting. The greatest expense of cultivation is in protecting the roots against the floods and rainfall, which is prodigious, exceeding that of any other locality on the globe. Sometimes eight and ten inches of water will fall in a single day, which has to be carried off the fields by powerful steam drainage apparatus, and pumped over the dikes into the sea.

Back of these alluvial deposits is a strip of sand-reefs that were formerly the coast-line. Miles and miles of pure white sand, that glistens in the sun like snow, divides the settled country from a primeval forest which covers an undulating surface that grows bolder and bolder until it breaks into ranges of mountains that run parallel with the coast and divide the water-sheds of the great rivers that have their source in a wilderness that has been but partially explored. The ideal tropical forest can be found in British Guiana, and easily reached by those in search of the picturesque, although curiously enough all of the great rivers that bisect the colony are obstructed by granite ledges, rapids, and cataracts which limit navigation and retard the development of the interior. All freight, be it merchandise or saw-logs, has to be hauled around these obstructions, which makes transportation expensive and often impossible.

All of the waterfalls are picturesque. Some of them are imposing, particularly in the rainy season when the floods pour down from the mountains and the plains. The mountain ranges are also notable for their scenery, and the peak Roraima is one of the most remarkable of natural phenomena. It is an immense sandstone rock, rising six thousand feet from the plains, like a gigantic castle. Its sides are almost perpendicular, and its summit, about eight miles

long and four miles broad, is a flat, bare surface, with frequent immense depressions that are filled with water during the rainy season and form miniature lakes. It is impossible to reach the summit except by a single path which was made in 1884 by Professor Im Thurn, who was more than three months making the ascent. Not more than three parties have since succeeded in accomplishing the feat.

The timber tract is covered with dense forests of valuable trees, and might furnish cabinet woods with great profit but for the cataracts. This part of the country is inhabited by a few negroes and Indians, who cut timber along the open rivers and creeks with primitive implements, but they can do little more without expensive plants. If roads and tramways were extended into the forest, and saw-mills were set up, timber cutting would be a profitable enterprise.

Beyond the mountains the forest tract is succeeded by the savannahs, or *llanos*, as the Spaniards call them—the great grass plains which occupy so much of the interior of South America. The land is low, flat, and covered with a high, coarse grass almost as heavy as reeds. As one looks upon this unbroken meadow, thousands of square miles in extent, it seems like a vast sea, ending only at the horizon, and unbroken except here and there by a narrow thread of emerald underbrush, which marks the winding course of some small stream. There is a gradual rise to the westward, as upon our prairie lands in Dakota and Kansas, but it is not apparent to the traveller. The savannahs near the large rivers are subject to inundations during the rainy season, and much is marshy.

The last tract or zone is found in the highlands that rise gradually into rocky foot-hills, and terminate in the ranges or ribs which run eastward from the main Andean chain,

and separate the valleys that are drained by the Amazon and the Orinoco. It is in these mountains that the mines are found.

Aside from the mining camps the scattered inhabitants of the interior are Indians, chiefly Caribs, and a few half-breeds of Carib and negro blood called Cobungrus. They retain the many good qualities of the aborigines, and add the physique and strength of the West Indian negro. They are industrious, intelligent, and docile, hospitable to strangers, and always ready to furnish food and assistance. They love the open air, and hate to work in the mines. Their houses consist of four posts supporting a roof of palm-leaves. Sometimes thin walls are made of braided leaves and rushes to shelter them from the sun and storms. The men are usually naked, except for a loin-cloth of dark-blue cotton and ornaments of alligator's teeth, monkey's teeth, snake rattles, and other trophies of the chase. The women wear a single cotton gown or chemise, cut low at the top and high at the bottom, quantities of beads around their necks and arms, and are much given to ear-rings and other ornaments. They are large-framed, stalwart creatures, capable of any degree of endurance, and spend most of their lives in the open air. They swim like fish, shoot with guns and bows with equal facility, handle boats as well as the men, and one can easily imagine regiments of Amazons such as the early voyagers described. In their wars, which have been infrequent since the sixteenth century, women have fought side by side with men, but they have never provoked hostilities, and are as civil and as peaceable a people as exist in the world. They sleep in hammocks made of grass fibers, handsomely ornamented with feathers and the skins of birds and snakes.

The foliage in the forests is marvellous. The colors are

intense, the flowering plants almost infinite in number and variety, and the contrast between the bright scarlet of some of the blossoms, the vivid green of the leaves, and the huge dark-brown pods of the wild chocolate-tree is very striking. The air is always full of the cries of animals, insects, and birds. There is no place on earth where vegetable and animal life thrives so luxuriously. The Indians partake so much of the nature of the animal kingdom that they understand by instinct the nature and habits of the insects, reptiles, birds, and beasts, and tame and train them without the slightest difficulty. They consider tame animals legal-tender in trade, with which they purchase what they want from their neighbors. They have no use for money. Nature furnishes all they need. They spin the wild cotton and work up various fiber plants with great skill. They weave exquisite hammocks and handsome robes for ceremonial occasions. They make good pottery, and decorate it with the same designs that are found among the Incas of Peru. Their chief diet is the cassava root, which answers for bread, and the fishes and water-fowls with which the rivers abound. They have a drink called *paiwarie*, made from cassava bread, first masticated, saturated with saliva, and then thrown into a jar of water to ferment. It has a sharp, bitterish taste, is a mild stimulant, and sufficiently intoxicating to be popular, although not injurious to the health. They have a fair idea of music, and play on native instruments made of reeds and the bones of animals. All of their songs, like those of other savages, are written in the minor key, but occasionally one hears melodies that resemble the negro hymns of our Southern States, which evidently were imported by immigrants from the West Indies or negro sailors from the United States.

They have a generous but occasionally inconvenient code of hospitality. All portable and necessary articles are common property. An Indian thinks nothing of walking into the house of any other Indian of the same tribe and appropriating food or whatever he finds there, nor do the owners resent it. In the same way when in his frequent wanderings a native finds a canoe in a convenient spot he takes it without asking permission, and leaves it wherever his own journey happens to end. Thus, passed from Indian to Indian, the owner at last recovers his property, or if he wants it sooner he must fetch it back himself, or wait till some other chance Indian, travelling, brings it into the neighborhood from which it was taken.

The llanos are covered with cattle, which are left almost entirely to nature. Farms were established about the end of the last century, but were often destroyed and the stock dispersed during the revolutionary times. When the ranches were re-established, the cattle, which in the meantime had greatly multiplied, were not all again gathered together. The greater number were allowed to roam and breed where they pleased. Once a year the young cattle are driven into the strong stockades which form the central point of each of the gigantic ranches into which the savannahs are divided. After being branded, they are let out to roam again. Every now and then as a large number attain their growth they are taken down the river to the nearest town and shipped to market. Many are also slaughtered on the farms, and the meat, after being cut into thin slices, is slightly salted, dried in the sun, and then carried to the Amazon and Orinoco.

On the Brazilian side, at the central farm of the province, resides a government official who is responsible for all the cattle in his district. His only assistants are cow-herds



of low caste, half-breed Brazilians and Indians. Most of the work of these herdsmen is done on the backs of small but strong horses which, when not in use, roam all but free on the savannah. All the food required is produced on the spot. For meat the men are allowed to kill a certain number of cattle for their own use, and the milk, which, however, as is always the case with any but domesticated cattle, is small in quantity, is at their disposal. Game, especially venison, is abundant. Cassava is grown at the principal farms, where it is made into farina—a coarse but excellent and nutritive flour, which is distributed twice a month to the men on the farms. Yams, potatoes, plantains, and fruits are but little grown, except in the fields of the Indians, where they flourish so well that they might evidently be cultivated with advantage elsewhere.

In 1840 there was quite a brush between the Brazilian and British colonial authorities. An English missionary having settled at Pirara, Brazilian soldiers were sent from Fort San Joaquim, on the river Branco, to turn him out, on the plea that the place was within Brazilian territory. Troops were sent up from Georgetown to reassert British rights, and the Brazilians retreated. The affair was made the topic of a prolonged diplomatic correspondence until 1862, when a *modus vivendi* was reached by which the Brazilians and the British both agreed to consider the disputed territory neutral ground.

There is a line of steamers from Georgetown up the Essequibo as far as the rapids, a distance of perhaps two hundred miles. Three times a week a smaller steamer runs thirty-five miles farther up the river for the convenience of the few who travel in that direction, but chiefly for the benefit of the government, which has a penal colony on the

Mazaruni, a large tributary of the Essequibo. Other means of transportation are primitive.

There was some gold mining along the Essequibo and its affluents during the domination of the Dutch, a hundred years ago, but it was only casual, and the search for the treasures described by the Indians had been abandoned long before. In 1856 a deposit was accidentally discovered, and there was some excitement, which brought professional prospectors to the colony and caused several companies to be formed; but the results were not encouraging and the search was abandoned. Nothing more was heard of gold in Guiana until 1880, when a party of French teamsters from Cayenne stumbled upon valuable placer deposits in the sands of the Puruni River, a branch of the Mazaruni, which enters the Essequibo from the westward about fifty miles from its mouth. There was a rush in that direction from all parts of the world, especially from California and Cape Town; and prospectors searched the entire district between the Essequibo and Orinoco rivers. The Barima and the Barama were both found rich in gold, and the mountains they drain have since become a famous mining district. On Conamarook Creek, a branch of the Potaro River, was picked up in 1891 one of the most valuable nuggets ever known. It weighed 509 ounces, and contained 274 ounces of pure gold, realizing \$5435.

The most popular and populated diggings are on the Barima River, in the disputed territory, where several million dollars of foreign capital, mostly British, is invested, and some twenty thousand miners are at work. Most of the hard labor is done by negroes from Jamaica and other West India islands, who seem to be the only race that can endure the climate. India coolies and Chinamen are numerous about the mining camps, and serve as cooks and in

other light occupations, but cannot work with pick and shovel under the tropic sun.

The colonial authorities of Guiana have calmly occupied this territory, organizing police, appointing local magistrates, assuming legislative as well as executive jurisdiction, providing laws and regulations for the government of the mining camps, requiring prospectors to obtain licenses from the colonial officials at Georgetown before commencing work, and to advertise their claims and locations in the official gazette of the colony. Sanitary regulations have been imposed, and rules to govern the erection of buildings and the sinking of shafts. No miner can cease work upon his claim without a formal notification to the British colonial authorities, otherwise he forfeits his title. And he must keep a daily record of his progress and his output, which is regularly reported to the proper inspector, and he can sell his product only to a licensed dealer. A duty of ninety cents per ounce is imposed on all gold exported from the colony, and none can be shipped without an invoice showing from what mine it comes.

These and many similar restrictions have been imposed by the British colonial authorities within a territory to which they did not claim ownership until the discoveries of gold, and over which they did not attempt to exercise jurisdiction until 1883. And as new mines have been discovered the British have gradually pushed their frontier line westward, until it now includes nearly twice as much territory as they claimed forty years ago, and very much more than was ceded to Great Britain by Holland in 1814. It is true that the Venezuelans have shown no enterprise or activity in developing their own resources. They have permitted foreign prospectors to enter and occupy the mining districts at their will, and have never attempted to

exercise police or even administrative control in the mining camps. The original prospectors, having been Englishmen, naturally looked to the colonial government at Georgetown for protection, and the other foreigners fell in without a question, acknowledged British sovereignty, and obeyed British law.

I leave the grounds of controversy to be stated on the one side by Mr. Richard Olney, secretary of state, in his note of instructions to Mr. Bayard, dated July 20, 1895, and on the other by the Marquis of Salisbury in his comprehensive reply. This famous correspondence, and the message of the president with which it was transmitted to Congress, appear as an Appendix to this volume.

It was within this disputed territory between the Orinoco and the Amazon that the ancient voyageurs located the mythical city of Manoa, upon the silver lake of Parima—the El Dorado upon which the wonder and the greed of two centuries were concentrated; the country upon which more ambition rested than any man has ever known. Said Sir Walter Raleigh:

“I have many years had knowledge by relation of that mighty, rich, and beautiful empire of Guayana, and of that great and golden city which the Spaniards call El Dorado, and the natives Manoa. Whatsoever prince shall possess it, that prince shall be lord of more gold and of a more wealthy possession than either the King of Spain or the Great Turk.”

It was not more than ten years after the return of Columbus from his first voyage that strange tales were heard about the courts of Europe concerning a mysterious city situated in some vague place upon Terra Firma where were untold treasures of gold and silver and precious stones. Tidings of this barbaric splendor were brought home by

every voyageur, and each caravel that left the shores of Europe carried ambitious and avaricious men, who hoped, if they did not expect, to share its plunder before their return to Spain. But this alluring El Dorado was not a place. It was a man. The term signifies "the gilded," and was originally applied to a mythical king, who every morning was sprinkled with gold-dust by his slaves.

According to Father Gumilla, one of the most reliable of the early writers, the fable originally referred to the source of the wealth found among the Indians along the coast of Cartagena and Santa Marta. Vasca Nuñez de Balboa reported tidings he gained of it from friendly Indians upon the Isthmus of Panama, and while searching for this city he discovered the Pacific Ocean. When Mexico was plundered and the treasures of Montezuma were scattered among the nobles of Spain; when Pizarro had stripped the innocent incas of the millions their industry had acquired, the avarice of the invaders was not only not satiated, but was more fiercely inflamed, and El Dorado, the highest prize in the grand lottery of the conquest, remained yet to be drawn. By the middle of the sixteenth century cupidity and credulity were excited to the highest degree. The seamanship, the science, and the chivalry of all Europe were called out by this golden phantom, so possible, so actual, so alluring; and more enterprise, more endurance, and more valor were wasted in its pursuit than were ever expended before or since in peace or war. The first tangible evidence of the existence of the mythical city was brought to Europe by Gonzales Ximenes de Casada, a treacherous knight who was sent out by Pizarro on an exploring expedition after the conquest of Peru.

After the peaceful incas had been subjugated, their palaces and temples plundered, and their cities destroyed, the

restless and reckless freebooters that had been attracted to Peru gave Pizarro a great deal of trouble. The viceroy deemed it prudent to keep them occupied, for a community of idle men of that character were capable of infinite mischief. Therefore, as the fable had reached Lima, Pizarro organized an expedition of several hundred soldiers and several thousand Indian slaves to carry their supplies and equipment, and sent them over the Andes under the command of his brother Gonzalo, in search of the Gilded King. A more desperate and turbulent band of ruffians was never turned loose upon the world; but, fortunately, few of them returned. The great majority left their bones and armor lying unburied upon the rocky slopes of the Andes and among the forests that hide the affluents of the Orinoco and the Amazon.

Gonzales Ximenes de Casada, who was an officer of low rank in the expedition, with a handful of selected mutineers, deserted his commander, stole his food, and, finding the sources of the Orinoco, followed that river in canoes, while young Pizarro narrowly escaped death from starvation. To avoid the consequences of his desertion, when he arrived in Spain Casada told most fabulous stories of his experience, and for that reason was welcomed as a hero instead of being hung as a knave. One Antonio Galvano wrote a book called *The Discoveries of the World*, describing Casada's adventures, and that volume caused more heart-burning and brain-fever in Europe than all the doctors of medicine or geography could cure. Casada described a city called El Dorado, which he claimed to have found in the midst of a great white lake, whose meanest house, he said, surpassed in grandeur the palaces of the incas and the Aztecs and the temples Pizarro and Cortez had plundered and overthrown.

"All the vessels in the kitchen," wrote this merciless liar, "are of gold and silver studded with diamonds and precious stones. In this house are statues of solid gold as large as giants, and other figures in proportion of the beasts, birds, fishes, trees, and herbs of his kingdom; yea, and robes and budgets, and chests, and troughs of solid gold. There is a garden of pleasure in the island where the people are wont to recreate, in which are also figures of gold and silver of an invention and magnificence the like of which was never seen. And the king of that country, yea, and all his court, wear apparel of the most famous texture, so that it doth appear like garments sprinkled with gold and silver from his sandals to his crown."

These falsehoods were read and believed in all the courts of Europe, and cost the lives of thousands of the bravest knights of two centuries, who plunged into the green gulfs of the Amazon and the Orinoco, never to emerge again. Casada brought lumps of virgin gold picked up in Guiana to prove his words, and even the fable of the Amazons seemed as true as the Gospels to explorers who had seen the Carib women in Hispaniola and Jamaica, and along the Spanish Main, fighting as warriors by their husbands' sides.

One of the most tragic and romantic stories of the search for El Dorado concerns the fate of Pedro de Ursua, a noble, handsome, generous, and popular young knight of Navarre, who was sent by his uncle, the Viceroy of Peru, at the head of a large army to find and plunder the city that was paved with silver, and the river that flowed over sands of gold. His sweetheart, Doña Inez de Atienza, was a beautiful young woman of Trujillo, and hers was no common love. Although gently nurtured and of delicate physique, accustomed to surroundings of luxury and refinement, she insisted upon sharing his adventures and hardships, and, as

the ancient chronicler quaintly expresses it, "forsook not her lord in his travels even unto death." Inez de Atienza is the heroine of the Orinoco as Madame Godin is of the Amazon.

Ursua was assassinated by his disappointed lieutenants after the expedition had been out four months, and a few days afterwards a fiend incarnate, named Aguirre, caused Inez to be murdered in her sleep because her mattress took up too much room in his boat. The pious chronicler of the expedition exclaims:

"The birds mourned on the trees, the wild beasts of the forest lamented, the waters murmured their grief, the fish groaned beneath them, and the winds execrated the deed when the wicked Llamoso cut the veins of her beautiful white neck while she was sleeping, and let the blood of her pure heart flow away."

She was buried on the banks of the Orinoco, among the forests in the foot-hills of the Andes. The men who followed Aguirre were so touched by her fate that they gathered flowers to cover her grave, and cut this epitaph in the bark of a tree under which she was laid:

This is the burial-place of one whose beauty and faithfulness are unequalled, and whom cruel men slew without cause.

Columbus and Raleigh, the two most gifted and conscientious of American explorers, told tales that were even more fabulous than the legends of Casada, and nobody doubted their truth. John Milton himself lent them credence in *Paradise Lost*, and the blessing of the pope gave a sanctity to the search for the savage Cræsus. Columbus was derided, Cortez was sneered at, and Pizarro was pronounced an impostor, but the world, which always vibrates between



absolute scepticism and absolute credulity, finally came to believe not only in them, but in everything their imitators told.

The nuggets of gold and the rudely wrought images and ornaments of the same metal which Sir Walter Raleigh laid at the feet of Queen Elizabeth when he returned from his exploration of the Orinoco doubtless came from the now famous mine of El Callao, but the El Dorado was never found. No courage could overcome, no persistence could discover what did not exist, and the fabulous king of the fabulous island still sits on his fabulous throne, covered from his fabulous crown to his fabulous sandals with the fabulous dust of gold.



# APPENDIX

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## MESSAGE

FROM THE

## PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

*Relative to the Venezuelan boundary controversy ; and correspondence  
with the British Government on the subject.*

### *To the Congress :*

In my annual message addressed to the Congress on the third instant I called attention to the pending boundary controversy between Great Britain and the Republic of Venezuela, and recited the substance of a representation made by this Government to Her Britannic Majesty's Government suggesting reasons why such dispute should be submitted to arbitration for settlement, and inquiring whether it would be so submitted.

The answer of the British Government, which was then awaited, has since been received, and, together with the despatch to which it is a reply, is hereto appended.

Such reply is embodied in two communications addressed by the British Prime Minister to Sir Julian Pauncefote, the British Ambassador at this Capital. It will be seen that one of these communications is devoted exclusively to observations upon the Monroe doctrine, and claims that in the present instance a new and strange extension and development of this doctrine is insisted on by the United States, that the reasons justifying an appeal to the doctrine enunciated by President

Monroe are generally inapplicable "to the state of things in which we live at the present day," and especially inapplicable to a controversy involving the boundary line between Great Britain and Venezuela.

Without attempting extended argument in reply to these positions, it may not be amiss to suggest that the doctrine upon which we stand is strong and sound because its enforcement is important to our peace and safety as a nation, and is essential to the integrity of our free institutions and the tranquil maintenance of our distinctive form of government. It was intended to apply to every stage of our national life, and can not become obsolete while our Republic endures. If the balance of power is justly a cause for jealous anxiety among the governments of the old world, and a subject for our absolute non-interference, none the less is an observance of the Monroe doctrine of vital concern to our people and their Government.

Assuming, therefore, that we may properly insist upon this doctrine without regard to "the state of things in which we live," or any changed conditions here or elsewhere, it is not apparent why its application may not be invoked in the present controversy.

If a European power, by an extension of its boundaries, takes possession of the territory of one of our neighboring Republics against its will and in derogation of its rights, it is difficult to see why to that extent such European power does not thereby attempt to extend its system of government to that portion of this continent which is thus taken. This is the precise action which President Monroe declared to be "dangerous to our peace and safety," and it can make no difference whether the European system is extended by an advance of frontier or otherwise.

It is also suggested in the British reply that we should not seek to apply the Monroe doctrine to the pending dispute because it does not embody any principle of international law which "is founded on the general consent of nations," and that "no statesman, however eminent, and no nation, however powerful, are competent to insert into the code of international law a novel principle which was never recognized before, and which has not since been accepted by the Government of any other country."

Practically the principle for which we contend has peculiar if not exclusive relation to the United States. It may not have been admitted in so many words to the code of international law, but since in international councils every nation is entitled to the rights belonging

to it, if the enforcement of the Monroe doctrine is something we may justly claim it has its place in the code of international law as certainly and as securely as if it were specifically mentioned, and where the United States is a suitor before the high tribunal that administers international law the question to be determined is whether or not we present claims which the justice of that code of law can find to be right and valid.

The Monroe doctrine finds its recognition in those principles of international law which are based upon the theory that every nation shall have its rights protected and its just claims enforced.

Of course this Government is entirely confident that under the sanction of this doctrine we have clear rights and undoubted claims. Nor is this ignored in the British reply. The Prime Minister, while not admitting that the Monroe doctrine is applicable to present conditions, states: "In declaring that the United States would resist any such enterprise if it was contemplated, President Monroe adopted a policy which received the entire sympathy of the English Government of that date." He further declares: "Though the language of President Monroe is directed to the attainment of objects which most Englishmen would agree to be salutary, it is impossible to admit that they have been inscribed by any adequate authority in the code of international law." Again he says: "They (Her Majesty's Government) fully concur with the view which President Monroe apparently entertained, that any disturbance of the existing territorial distribution in the hemisphere by any fresh acquisitions on the part of any European State, would be a highly inexpedient change."

In the belief that the doctrine for which we contend was clear and definite, that it was founded upon substantial considerations and involved our safety and welfare, that it was fully applicable to our present conditions and to the state of the world's progress, and that it was directly related to the pending controversy, and without any conviction as to the final merits of the dispute, but anxious to learn in a satisfactory and conclusive manner whether Great Britain sought, under a claim of boundary, to extend her possessions on this continent without right, or whether she merely sought possession of territory fairly included within her lines of ownership, this Government proposed to the Government of Great Britain a resort to arbitration as the proper means of settling the question, to the end that a vexatious boundary dispute between the two contestants might be determined and our exact

standing and relation in respect to the controversy might be made clear.

It will be seen from the correspondence herewith submitted that this proposition has been declined by the British Government, upon grounds which in the circumstances seem to me to be far from satisfactory. It is deeply disappointing that such an appeal, actuated by the most friendly feelings towards both nations directly concerned, addressed to the sense of justice and to the magnanimity of one of the great powers of the world and touching its relations to one comparatively weak and small, should have produced no better results.

The course to be pursued by this Government in view of the present condition does not appear to admit of serious doubt. Having labored faithfully for many years to induce Great Britain to submit this dispute to impartial arbitration, and having been now finally apprized of her refusal to do so, nothing remains but to accept the situation, to recognize its plain requirements and deal with it accordingly. Great Britain's present proposition has never thus far been regarded as admissible by Venezuela, though any adjustment of the boundary which that country may deem for her advantage and may enter into of her own free will cannot, of course, be objected to by the United States.

Assuming, however, that the attitude of Venezuela will remain unchanged, the dispute has reached such a stage as to make it now incumbent upon the United States to take measures to determine with sufficient certainty for its justification what is the true divisional line between the Republic of Venezuela and British Guiana. The inquiry to that end should of course be conducted carefully and judicially, and due weight should be given to all available evidence, records, and facts in support of the claims of both parties.

In order that such an examination should be prosecuted in a thorough and satisfactory manner, I suggest that the Congress make an adequate appropriation for the expenses of a Commission, to be appointed by the Executive, who shall make the necessary investigation and report upon the matter with the least possible delay. When such report is made and accepted it will, in my opinion, be the duty of the United States to resist by every means in its power as a wilful aggression upon its rights and interests the appropriation by Great Britain of any lands or the exercise of governmental jurisdiction over any territory which after investigation we have determined of right belongs to Venezuela.

In making these recommendations I am fully alive to the responsibility incurred, and keenly realize all the consequences that may follow.

I am, nevertheless, firm in my conviction that while it is a grievous thing to contemplate the two great English-speaking peoples of the world as being otherwise than friendly competitors in the onward march of civilization, and strenuous and worthy rivals in all the arts of peace, there is no calamity which a great nation can invite which equals that which follows a supine submission to wrong and injustice, and the consequent loss of national self-respect and honor, beneath which are shielded and defended a people's safety and greatness.

GROVER CLEVELAND.

EXECUTIVE MANSION,

December 17, 1895.

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*Mr. Olney to Mr. Bayard.*

No. 804.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

Washington, July 20, 1895.

His Excellency THOMAS F. BAYARD,

*Etc., etc., etc., London.*

SIR,—I am directed by the President to communicate to you his views upon a subject to which he has given much anxious thought, and respecting which he has not reached a conclusion without a lively sense of its great importance as well as of the serious responsibility involved in any action now to be taken.

It is not proposed, and for present purposes is not necessary, to enter into any detailed account of the controversy between Great Britain and Venezuela respecting the western frontier of the colony of British Guiana. The dispute is of ancient date, and began at least as early as the time when Great Britain acquired by the treaty with the Netherlands of 1814 "the establishments of Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice." From that time to the present the dividing line between these "establishments" (now called British Guiana) and Venezuela has never ceased to be a subject of contention. The claims of both parties, it must be conceded, are of a somewhat indefinite nature. On the one hand, Venezuela, in every constitution of government since she became an independent State, has declared her territorial limits to be those of the Captainty-General of Venezuela in 1810. Yet, out of "moderation and prudence," it is said, she has contented herself with claiming the

Essequibo line—the line of the Essequibo River, that is—to be the true boundary between Venezuela and British Guiana. On the other hand, at least an equal degree of indefiniteness distinguishes the claim of Great Britain.

It does not seem to be asserted, for instance, that in 1814 the “establishments” then acquired by Great Britain had any clearly defined western limits which can now be identified, and which are either the limits insisted upon to-day, or, being the original limits, have been the basis of legitimate territorial extensions. On the contrary, having the actual possession of a district called the Pomaron district, she apparently remained indifferent as to the exact area of the colony until 1840, when she commissioned an engineer, Sir Robert Schomburgk, to examine and lay down its boundaries. The result was the Schomburgk line, which was fixed by metes and bounds, was delineated on maps, and was at first indicated on the face of the country itself by posts, monograms, and other like symbols. If it was expected that Venezuela would acquiesce in this line, the expectation was doomed to speedy disappointment. Venezuela at once protested, and with such vigor and to such purpose that the line was explained to be only tentative—part of a general boundary scheme concerning Brazil and the Netherlands as well as Venezuela—and the monuments of the line set up by Schomburgk were removed by the express order of Lord Aberdeen. Under these circumstances, it seems impossible to treat the Schomburgk line as being the boundary claimed by Great Britain as matter of right, or as anything but a line originating in considerations of convenience and expediency. Since 1840 various other boundary lines have from time to time been indicated by Great Britain, but all as conventional lines—lines to which Venezuela’s assent has been desired, but which in no instance, it is believed, have been demanded as matter of right. Thus, neither of the parties is to-day standing for the boundary line predicated upon strict legal right—Great Britain having formulated no such claim at all, while Venezuela insists upon the Essequibo line only as a liberal concession to her antagonist.

Several other features of the situation remain to be briefly noticed—the continuous growth of the undefined British claim, the fate of the various attempts at arbitration of the controversy, and the part in the matter heretofore taken by the United States. As already seen, the exploitation of the Schomburgk line in 1840 was at once followed by the protest of Venezuela and by proceedings on the part of Great Britain



which could be fairly interpreted only as a disavowal of that line. Indeed, in addition to the facts already noticed, Lord Aberdeen himself in 1844 proposed a line beginning at the River Moroco, a distinct abandonment of the Schomburgk line. Notwithstanding this, however, every change in the British claim since that time has moved the frontier of British Guiana farther and farther to the westward of the line thus proposed. The Granville line of 1881 placed the starting-point at a distance of twenty-nine miles from the Moroco in the direction of Punta Barima. The Rosebery line of 1886 placed it west of the Guaima River, and about that time, if the British authority known as the *Statesman's Year Book* is to be relied upon, the area of British Guiana was suddenly enlarged by some 33,000 square miles—being stated as 76,000 square miles in 1885 and 109,000 square miles in 1887. The Salisbury line of 1890 fixed the starting-point of the line in the mouth of the Amacuro west of the Punta Barima on the Orinoco. And finally, in 1893, a second Rosebery line carried the boundary from a point to the west of the Amacuro as far as the source of the Cumano River and the Sierra of Usupamo. Nor have the various claims thus enumerated been claims on paper merely. An exercise of jurisdiction corresponding more or less to such claims has accompanied or followed closely upon each, and has been the more irritating and unjustifiable if, as is alleged, an agreement made in the year 1850 bound both parties to refrain from such occupation pending the settlement of the dispute.

While the British claim has been developing in the manner above described, Venezuela has made earnest and repeated efforts to have the question of boundary settled. Indeed, allowance being made for the distractions of a war of independence and for frequent internal revolutions, it may be fairly said that Venezuela has never ceased to strive for its adjustment. It could, of course, do so only through peaceful methods, any resort to force as against its powerful adversary being out of the question. Accordingly, shortly after the drawing of the Schomburgk line, an effort was made to settle the boundary by treaty and was apparently progressing towards a successful issue when the negotiations were brought to an end in 1844 by the death of the Venezuelan plenipotentiary.

In 1848 Venezuela entered upon a period of civil commotions which lasted for more than a quarter of a century, and the negotiations thus interrupted in 1844 were not resumed until 1876. In that year Vene-

zuela offered to close the dispute by accepting the Morocco line proposed by Lord Aberdeen. But, without giving reasons for his refusal, Lord Granville rejected the proposal and suggested a new line comprehending a large tract of territory, all pretension to which seemed to have been abandoned by the previous action of Lord Aberdeen. Venezuela refused to assent to it, and negotiations dragged along without result until 1882, when Venezuela concluded that the only course open to her was arbitration of the controversy. Before she had made any definite proposition, however, Great Britain took the initiative by suggesting the making of a treaty which should determine various other questions as well as that of the disputed boundary. The result was that a treaty was practically agreed upon with the Gladstone government in 1886 containing a general arbitration clause under which the parties might have submitted the boundary dispute to the decision of a third power or of several powers in amity with both.

Before the actual signing of the treaty, however, the administration of Mr. Gladstone was superseded by that of Lord Salisbury, which declined to accede to the arbitration clause of the treaty, notwithstanding the reasonable expectations of Venezuela to the contrary, based upon the Premier's emphatic declaration in the House of Lords that no serious government would think of not respecting the engagements of its predecessor. Since then Venezuela, on the one side, has been offering and calling for arbitration, while Great Britain, on the other, has responded by insisting upon the condition that any arbitration should relate only to such of the disputed territory as lies west of a line designated by herself. As this condition seemed inadmissible to Venezuela, and as, while the negotiations were pending, new appropriations of what is claimed to be Venezuelan territory continued to be made, Venezuela in 1887 suspended diplomatic relations with Great Britain, protesting "before Her British Majesty's Government, before all civilized nations and before the world in general, against the acts of spoliation committed to her detriment by the Government of Great Britain, which she at no time and on no account will recognize as capable of altering in the least the rights which she has inherited from Spain, and respecting which she will ever be willing to submit to the decision of a third power."

Diplomatic relations have not since been restored, though what is claimed to be new and flagrant British aggressions forced Venezuela to resume negotiations on the boundary question—in 1890, through its

Minister in Paris and a special envoy on that subject, and in 1898, through a confidential agent, Señor Michelena. These negotiations, however, met with the fate of other like previous negotiations—Great Britain refusing to arbitrate except as to territory west of an arbitrary line drawn by herself. All attempts in that direction definitely terminated in October, 1898, when Señor Michelena filed with the Foreign Office the following declaration :

"I perform a most strict duty in raising again in the name of the Government of Venezuela a most solemn protest against the proceedings of the Colony of British Guiana, constituting encroachments upon the territory of the Republic, and against the declaration contained in Your Excellency's communication that Her Britannic Majesty's Government considers that part of the territory as pertaining to British Guiana and admits no claim to it on the part of Venezuela. In support of this protest I reproduce all the arguments presented to Your Excellency in my note of 29 of last September and those which have been exhibited by the Government of Venezuela on the various occasions they have raised the same protest.

"I lay on Her Britannic Majesty's Government the entire responsibility of the incidents that may arise in the future from the necessity to which Venezuela has been driven to oppose by all possible means the dispossession of a part of her territory, for by disregarding her just representation to put an end to this violent state of affairs through the decision of arbiters, Her Majesty's Government ignores her rights and imposes upon her the painful though peremptory duty of providing for her own legitimate defence."

To the territorial controversy between Great Britain and the Republic of Venezuela, thus briefly outlined, the United States has not been and, indeed, in view of its traditional policy, could not be indifferent. The note to the British Foreign Office by which Venezuela opened negotiations in 1876 was at once communicated to this Government. In January, 1881, a letter of the Venezuelan Minister at Washington, respecting certain alleged demonstrations at the mouth of the Orinoco, was thus answered by Mr. Evarts, then Secretary of State:

"In reply I have to inform you that in view of the deep interest which the Government of the United States takes in all transactions tending to attempted encroachments of foreign powers upon the territory of any of the Republics of this continent, this Government could not look with indifference to the forcible acquisition of such territory by England if the mission of the vessels now at the mouth of the Orinoco should be found to be for that end. This Government awaits, therefore, with natural concern the more particular statements promised by the Government of Venezuela, which it hopes will not be long delayed."

In the February following, Mr. Evarts wrote again on the same subject as follows :

"Referring to your note of the 21st of December last, touching the operations of certain British war vessels in and near the mouth of the Orinoco River, and to my reply thereto of the 31st ultimo, as well as to the recent occasions in which the subject has been mentioned in our conferences concerning the business of your mission, I take it to be fitting now at the close of my incumbency of the office I hold to advert to the interest with which the Government of the United States cannot fail to regard any such purpose with respect to the control of American territory as is stated to be contemplated by the Government of Great Britain, and to express my regret that the further information promised in your note with regard to such designs had not reached me in season to receive the attention which, notwithstanding the severe pressure of public business at the end of an administrative term, I should have taken pleasure in bestowing upon it. I doubt not, however, that your representations in fulfilment of the awaited additional orders of your Government will have like earnest and solicitous consideration at the hands of my successor."

In November, 1882, the then state of negotiations with Great Britain, together with a copy of an intended note suggesting recourse to arbitration, was communicated to the Secretary of State by the President of Venezuela with the expression of the hope that the United States would give him its opinion and advice and such support as it deemed possible to offer Venezuela in order that justice should be done her. Mr. Frelinghuysen replied in a despatch to the United States Minister at Caracas as follows:

"This Government has already expressed its view that arbitration of such disputes is a convenient resort in the case of failure to come to a mutual understanding, and intimated its willingness, if Venezuela should so desire, to propose to Great Britain such a mode of settlement. It is felt that the tender of good offices would not be so profitable if the United States were to approach Great Britain as the advocate of any prejudged solution in favor of Venezuela. So far as the United States can counsel and assist Venezuela, it believes it best to confine its reply to the renewal of the suggestion of arbitration and the offer of all its good offices in that direction. This suggestion is the more easily made, since it appears, from the instruction sent by Señor Seijas to the Venezuelan Minister in London on the same 15th of July, 1882, that the President of Venezuela proposed to the British Government the submission of the dispute to arbitration by a third power.

"You will take an early occasion to present the foregoing considerations to Señor Seijas, saying to him that, while trusting that the direct proposal for arbitration already made to Great Britain may bear good fruit (if, indeed, it has not already done so by its acceptance in principle), the Government of the United States will cheerfully lend any needful aid to press upon Great Britain in a friendly way the proposition so made, and at the same time you will say to Señor Seijas (in personal conference, and not with the formality of a written communication) that the United States, while advocating strongly the recourse of arbitration for the adjustment of international disputes affecting the states of America, does not seek to put itself forward as their arbiter; that, viewing all such questions impartially and

with no intent or desire to prejudge their merits, the United States will not refuse its arbitration if asked by both parties, and that, regarding all such questions as essentially and distinctively American, the United States would always prefer to see such contentions adjusted through the arbitrament of an American rather than an European power."

In 1884 General Guzman Blanco, the Venezuelan Minister to England, appointed with special reference to pending negotiations for a general treaty with Great Britain, visited Washington on his way to London, and, after several conferences with the Secretary of State respecting the objects of his mission, was thus commended to the good offices of Mr. Lowell, our Minister at St. James':

"It will necessarily be somewhat within your discretion how far your good offices may be profitably employed with Her Majesty's Government to these ends, and at any rate you may take proper occasion to let Lord Granville know that we are not without concern as to whatever may affect the interests of a sister Republic of the American continent and its position in the family of nations.

"If General Guzman should apply to you for advice or assistance in realizing the purposes of his mission you will show him proper consideration, and without committing the United States to any determinate political solution you will endeavor to carry out the views of this instruction."

The progress of General Guzman's negotiations did not fail to be observed by this Government, and in December, 1886, with a view to preventing the rupture of diplomatic relations—which actually took place in February following—the then Secretary of State, Mr. Bayard, instructed our Minister to Great Britain to tender the arbitration of the United States, in the following terms:

"It does not appear that at any time heretofore the good offices of this Government have been actually tendered to avert a rupture between Great Britain and Venezuela. As intimated in my No. 68, our inaction in this regard would seem to be due to the reluctance of Venezuela to have the Government of the United States take any steps having relation to the action of the British Government which might, in appearance even, prejudice the resort to further arbitration or mediation which Venezuela desired. Nevertheless, the records abundantly testify our friendly concern in the adjustment of the dispute; and the intelligence now received warrants me in tendering through you to Her Majesty's Government the good offices of the United States to promote an amicable settlement of the respective claims of Great Britain and Venezuela in the premises.

"As proof of the impartiality with which we view the question, we offer our arbitration, if acceptable to both countries. We do this with the less hesitancy as the dispute turns upon simple and readily ascertainable historical facts.

"Her Majesty's Government will readily understand that this attitude of friendly

neutrality and entire impartiality touching the merits of the controversy, consisting wholly in a difference of facts between our friends and neighbors, is entirely consistent and compatible with the sense of responsibility that rests upon the United States in relation to the South American republics. The doctrines we announced two generations ago, at the instance and with the moral support and approval of the British Government, have lost none of their force or importance in the progress of time, and the Governments of Great Britain and the United States are equally interested in conserving a status, the wisdom of which has been demonstrated by the experience of more than half a century.

"It is proper, therefore, that you should convey to Lord Iddesleigh, in such sufficiently guarded terms as your discretion may dictate, the satisfaction that would be felt by the Government of the United States in perceiving that its wishes in this regard were permitted to have influence with Her Majesty's Government."

This offer of mediation was declined by Great Britain, with the statement that a similar offer had already been received from another quarter, and that the Queen's Government were still not without hope of a settlement by direct diplomatic negotiations. In February, 1888, having been informed that the Governor of British Guiana had by formal decree laid claim to the territory traversed by the route of a proposed railway from Ciudad Bolivar to Guacipati, Mr. Bayard addressed a note to our Minister to England, from which the following extracts are taken:

"The claim now stated to have been put forth by the authorities of British Guiana necessarily gives rise to grave disquietude, and creates an apprehension that the territorial claim does not follow historical traditions or evidence, but is apparently indefinite. At no time hitherto does it appear that the district, of which Guacipati is the centre, has been claimed as British territory, or that such jurisdiction has ever been asserted over its inhabitants, and if the reported decree of the Governor of British Guiana be indeed genuine, it is not apparent how any line of railway from Ciudad Bolivar to Guacipati could enter or traverse territory within the control of Great Britain.

"It is true that the line claimed by Great Britain as the western boundary of British Guiana is uncertain and vague. It is only necessary to examine the British Colonial Office List for a few years back to perceive this. In the issue for 1877, for instance, the line runs nearly southwardly from the mouth of the Amacuro to the junction of the Cotinga and Takutu rivers. In the issue of 1887, ten years later, it makes a wide detour to the westward, following the Yuruari. Guacipati lies considerably to the westward of the line officially claimed in 1887, and it may perhaps be instructive to compare with it the map which doubtless will be found in the Colonial Office List for the present year.

"It may be well for you to express anew to Lord Salisbury the great gratification it would afford this Government to see the Venezuelan dispute amicably and honorably settled by arbitration or otherwise, and our readiness to do anything we properly can to assist to that end.

"In the course of your conversation you may refer to the publication in the *London Financier* of January 24 (a copy of which you can procure and exhibit to Lord Salisbury), and express apprehension lest the widening pretensions of British Guiana to possess territory over which Venezuela's jurisdiction has never heretofore been disputed may not diminish the chances for a practical settlement.

"If, indeed, it should appear that there is no fixed limit to the British boundary claim, our good disposition to aid in a settlement might not only be defeated, but be obliged to give place to a feeling of grave concern."

In 1889, information having been received that Barima, at the mouth of the Orinoco, had been declared a British port, Mr. Blaine, then Secretary of State, authorized Mr. White to confer with Lord Salisbury for the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Venezuela on the basis of a temporary restoration of the *status quo*, and May 1 and May 6, 1890, sent the following telegrams to our Minister to England, Mr. Lincoln (May 1, 1890):

"Mr. Lincoln is instructed to use his good offices with Lord Salisbury to bring about the resumption of diplomatic intercourse between Great Britain and Venezuela as a preliminary step towards the settlement of the boundary dispute by arbitration. The joint proposals of Great Britain and the United States towards Portugal which have just been brought about would seem to make the present time propitious for submitting this question to an international arbitration. He is requested to propose to Lord Salisbury, with a view to an accommodation, that an informal conference be had in Washington or in London of representatives of the three Powers. In such conference the position of the United States is one solely of impartial friendship towards both litigants.

"(May 6, 1890) :

"It is, nevertheless, desired that you shall do all you can consistently with our attitude of impartial friendship to induce some accord between the contestants by which the merits of the controversy may be fairly ascertained and the rights of each party justly confirmed. The neutral position of this Government does not comport with any expression of opinion on the part of this Department as to what these rights are, but it is confident that the shifting footing on which the British boundary question has rested for several years past is an obstacle to such a correct appreciation of the nature and grounds of her claim as would alone warrant the formation of any opinion."

In the course of the same year, 1890, Venezuela sent to London a special envoy to bring about the resumption of diplomatic relations with Great Britain through the good offices of the United States Minister. But the mission failed because a condition of such resumption, steadily adhered to by Venezuela, was the reference of the boundary dispute to arbitration. Since the close of the negotiations initiated by Señor Michelena in 1893, Venezuela has repeatedly brought the contro-

versy to the notice of the United States, has insisted upon its importance to the United States as well as to Venezuela, has represented it to have reached an acute stage—making definite action by the United States imperative—and has not ceased to solicit the services and support of the United States in aid of its final adjustment. These appeals have not been received with indifference, and our Ambassador to Great Britain has been uniformly instructed to exert all his influence in the direction of the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Venezuela and in favor of arbitration of the boundary controversy. The Secretary of State in a communication to Mr. Bayard, bearing date July 13, 1894, used the following language:

“The President is inspired by a desire for a peaceable and honorable settlement of the existing difficulties between an American state and a powerful transatlantic nation, and would be glad to see the re-establishment of such diplomatic relations between them as would promote that end.

“I can discern but two equitable solutions of the present controversy. One is the arbitral determination of the rights of the disputants as the respective successors to the historical rights of Holland and Spain over the region in question. The other is to create a new boundary line in accordance with the dictates of mutual expediency and consideration. The two Governments having so far been unable to agree on a conventional line, the consistent and conspicuous advocacy by the United States and England of the principle of arbitration and their recourse thereto in settlement of important questions arising between them makes such a mode of adjustment especially appropriate in the present instance, and this Government will gladly do what it can to further a determination in that sense.”

Subsequent communications to Mr. Bayard direct him to ascertain whether a Minister from Venezuela would be received by Great Britain. In the annual Message to Congress of December 3d last, the President used the following language:

“The boundary of British Guiana still remains in dispute between Great Britain and Venezuela. Believing that its early settlement, on some just basis alike honorable to both parties, is in the line of our established policy to remove from this hemisphere all causes of difference with powers beyond the sea, I shall renew the efforts heretofore made to bring about a restoration of diplomatic relations between the disputants and to induce a reference to arbitration, a resort which Great Britain so conspicuously favors in principle and respects in practice and which is earnestly sought by her weaker adversary.”

And February 22, 1895, a joint resolution of Congress declared

“That the President’s suggestion . . . that Great Britain and Venezuela refer their dispute as to boundaries to friendly arbitration be earnestly recommended to the favorable consideration of both parties in interest.”



The important features of the existing situation, as shown by the foregoing recital, may be briefly stated.

1. The title to territory of indefinite but confessedly very large extent is in dispute between Great Britain on the one hand and the South American Republic of Venezuela on the other.

2. The disparity in the strength of the claimants is such that Venezuela can hope to establish her claim only through peaceful methods—through an agreement with her adversary either upon the subject itself or upon an arbitration.

3. The controversy, with varying claims on the part of Great Britain, has existed for more than half a century, during which period many earnest and persistent efforts of Venezuela to establish a boundary by agreement have proved unsuccessful.

4. The futility of the endeavor to obtain a conventional line being recognized, Venezuela for a quarter of a century has asked and striven for arbitration.

5. Great Britain, however, has always and continuously refused to arbitrate, except upon the condition of a renunciation of a large part of the Venezuelan claim and of a concession to herself of a large share of the territory in controversy.

6. By the frequent interposition of its good offices at the instance of Venezuela, by constantly urging and promoting the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries, by pressing for arbitration of the disputed boundary, by offering to act as arbitrator, by expressing its grave concern whenever new alleged instances of British aggression upon Venezuelan territory have been brought to its notice, the Government of the United States has made it clear to Great Britain and to the world that the controversy is one in which both its honor and its interests are involved and the continuance of which it cannot regard with indifference.

The accuracy of the foregoing analysis of the existing status cannot, it is believed, be challenged. It shows that status to be such that those charged with the interests of the United States are now forced to determine exactly what those interests are and what course of action they require. It compels them to decide to what extent, if any, the United States may and should intervene in a controversy between and primarily concerning only Great Britain and Venezuela, and to decide how far it is bound to see that the integrity of Venezuelan territory is not impaired by the pretensions of its powerful antagonist. Are any

such right and duty devolved upon the United States? If not, the United States has already done all, if not more than all, that a purely sentimental interest in the affairs of the two countries justifies, and to push its interposition further would be unbecoming and undignified, and might well subject it to the charge of impertinent intermeddling with affairs with which it has no rightful concern. On the other hand, if any such right and duty exist, their due exercise and discharge will not permit of any action that shall not be efficient and that, if the power of the United States is adequate, shall not result in the accomplishment of the end in view. The question thus presented, as matter of principle and regard being had to the settled national policy, does not seem difficult of solution. Yet the momentous practical consequences dependent upon its determination require that it should be carefully considered, and that the grounds of the conclusion arrived at should be fully and frankly stated.

That there are circumstances under which a nation may justly interpose in a controversy to which two or more other nations are the direct and immediate parties is an admitted canon of international law. The doctrine is ordinarily expressed in terms of the most general character and is perhaps incapable of more specific statement. It is declared in substance that a nation may avail itself of this right whenever what is done or proposed by any of the parties primarily concerned is a serious and direct menace to its own integrity, tranquillity, or welfare. The propriety of the rule when applied in good faith will not be questioned in any quarter. On the other hand, it is an inevitable though unfortunate consequence of the wide scope of the rule that it has only too often been made a cloak for schemes of wanton spoliation and aggrandizement. We are concerned at this time, however, not so much with the general rule as with a form of it which is peculiarly and distinctively American. Washington, in the solemn admonitions of the Farewell Address, explicitly warned his countrymen against entanglements with the politics or the controversies of European powers.

"Europe," he said, "has a set of primary interests which to us have none or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities. Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course."

During the administration of President Monroe this doctrine of the Farewell Address was first considered in all its aspects and with a view to all its practical consequences. The Farewell Address, while it took America out of the field of European politics, was silent as to the part Europe might be permitted to play in America. Doubtless it was thought the latest addition to the family of nations should not make haste to prescribe rules for the guidance of its older members, and the expediency and propriety of serving the powers of Europe with notice of a complete and distinctive American policy excluding them from interference with American political affairs might well seem dubious to a generation to whom the French alliance, with its manifold advantages to the cause of American independence, was fresh in mind.

Twenty years later, however, the situation had changed. The lately born nation had greatly increased in power and resources, had demonstrated its strength on land and sea, and as well in the conflicts of arms as in the pursuits of peace, and had begun to realize the commanding position on this continent which the character of its people, their free institutions, and their remoteness from the chief scene of European contentions combined to give to it. The Monroe administration therefore did not hesitate to accept and apply the logic of the Farewell Address by declaring in effect that American non-intervention in European affairs necessarily implied and meant European non-intervention in American affairs. Conceiving unquestionably that complete European non-interference in American concerns would be cheaply purchased by complete American non-interference in European concerns, President Monroe, in the celebrated Message of December 2, 1823, used the following language :

“ In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy to do so. It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparations for our defence. With the movements in this hemisphere, we are, of necessity, more immediately connected, and by causes which must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial observers. The political system of the allied powers is essentially different in this respect from that of America. This difference proceeds from that which exists in their respective governments. And to the defence of our own, which has been achieved by the loss of so much blood and treasure and matured by the wisdom of their most enlightened citizens, and under which we have enjoyed unexampled felicity, this whole nation is devoted. We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on

their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety.

"With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the governments who have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power, in any other light than the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States. . . . Our policy in regard to Europe, which was adopted at an early stage of the wars which have so long agitated that quarter of the globe, nevertheless remains the same, which is, not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of its powers ; to consider the government *de facto* as the legitimate government for us ; to cultivate friendly relations with it, and to preserve those relations by a frank, firm, and manly policy, meeting, in all instances, the just claims of every power, submitting to injuries from none. But in regard to these continents, circumstances are eminently and conspicuously different. It is impossible that the allied powers should extend their political system to any portion of either continent without endangering our peace and happiness ; nor can any one believe that our southern brethren, if left to themselves, would adopt it of their own accord. It is equally impossible, therefore, that we should behold such interposition, in any form, with indifference."

The Monroe administration, however, did not content itself with formulating a correct rule for the regulation of the relations between Europe and America. It aimed at also securing the practical benefits to result from the application of the rule. Hence the message just quoted declared that the American continents were fully occupied and were not the subjects for future colonization by European powers. To this spirit and this purpose, also, are to be attributed the passages of the same message which treat any infringement of the rule against interference in American affairs on the part of the powers of Europe as an act of unfriendliness to the United States. It was realized that it was futile to lay down such a rule unless its observance could be enforced. It was manifest that the United States was the only power in this hemisphere capable of enforcing it. It was therefore courageously declared not merely that Europe ought not to interfere in American affairs, but that any European power doing so would be regarded as antagonizing the interests and inviting the opposition of the United States.

That America is in no part open to colonization, though the proposition was not universally admitted at the time of its first enunciation, has long been universally conceded. We are now concerned, therefore, only with that other practical application of the Monroe doctrine, the

disregard of which by an European power is to be deemed an act of unfriendliness towards the United States. The precise scope and limitations of this rule cannot be too clearly apprehended. It does not establish any general protectorate by the United States over other American states. It does not relieve any American state from its obligations as fixed by international law, nor prevent any European power directly interested from enforcing such obligations or from inflicting merited punishment for the breach of them. It does not contemplate any interference in the internal affairs of any American state or in the relations between it and other American states. It does not justify any attempt on our part to change the established form of government of any American state or to prevent the people of such state from altering that form according to their own will and pleasure. The rule in question has but a single purpose and object. It is that no European power or combination of European powers shall forcibly deprive an American state of the right and power of self-government and of shaping for itself its own political fortunes and destinies.

That the rule thus defined has been the accepted public law of this country ever since its promulgation cannot fairly be denied. Its pronouncement by the Monroe administration at that particular time was unquestionably due to the inspiration of Great Britain, who at once gave to it an open and unqualified adhesion which has never been withdrawn. But the rule was decided upon and formulated by the Monroe administration as a distinctively American doctrine of great import to the safety and welfare of the United States after the most careful consideration by a Cabinet which numbered among its members John Quincy Adams, Calhoun, Crawford, and Wirt, and which before acting took both Jefferson and Madison into its counsels. Its promulgation was received with acclaim by the entire people of the country irrespective of party. Three years after, Webster declared that the doctrine involved the honor of the country. "I look upon it," he said, "as part of its treasures of reputation, and for one I intend to guard it," and he added,

"I look on the message of December, 1823, as forming a bright page in our history. I will help neither to erase it nor to tear it out; nor shall it be by any act of mine blurred or blotted. It did honor to the sagacity of the government, and I will not diminish that honor."

Though the rule thus highly eulogized by Webster has never been

formally affirmed by Congress, the House in 1864 declared against the Mexican monarchy sought to be set up by the French as not in accord with the policy of the United States, and in 1889 the Senate expressed its disapproval of the connection of any European power with a canal across the Isthmus of Darien or Central America. It is manifest that, if a rule has been openly and uniformly declared and acted upon by the executive branch of the Government for more than seventy years without express repudiation by Congress, it must be conclusively presumed to have its sanction. Yet it is certainly no more than the exact truth to say that every administration since President Monroe's has had occasion, and sometimes more occasions than one, to examine and consider the Monroe doctrine and has in each instance given it emphatic endorsement. Presidents have dwelt upon it in messages to Congress, and Secretaries of State have time after time made it the theme of diplomatic representation. Nor, if the practical results of the rule be sought for, is the record either meager or obscure. Its first and immediate effect was indeed most momentous and far reaching. It was the controlling factor in the emancipation of South America, and to it the independent states which now divide that region between them are largely indebted for their very existence. Since then the most striking single achievement to be credited to the rule is the evacuation of Mexico by the French upon the termination of the civil war. But we are also indebted to it for the provisions of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, which both neutralized any interoceanic canal across Central America and expressly excluded Great Britain from occupying or exercising any dominion over any part of Central America. It has been used in the case of Cuba as if justifying the position that, while the sovereignty of Spain will be respected, the island will not be permitted to become the possession of any other European power. It has been influential in bringing about the definite relinquishment of any supposed protectorate by Great Britain over the Mosquito Coast.

President Polk, in the case of Yucatan and the proposed voluntary transfer of that country to Great Britain or Spain, relied upon the Monroe doctrine, though perhaps erroneously, when he declared in a special message to Congress on the subject that the United States could not consent to any such transfer. Yet, in somewhat the same spirit, Secretary Fish affirmed in 1870 that President Grant had but followed "the teachings of all our history" in declaring in his annual message of that year that existing dependencies were no longer regarded

as subject to transfer from one European power to another, and that when the present relation of colonies ceases they are to become independent powers. Another development of the rule, though apparently not necessarily required by either its letter or its spirit, is found in the objection to arbitration of South American controversies by an European power. American questions, it is said, are for American decision, and on that ground the United States went so far as to refuse to mediate in the war between Chili and Peru jointly with Great Britain and France. Finally, on the ground, among others, that the authority of the Monroe doctrine and the prestige of the United States as its exponent and sponsor would be seriously impaired, Secretary Bayard strenuously resisted the enforcement of the Pelletier claim against Hayti.

"The United States," he said, "has proclaimed herself the protector of this western world, in which she is by far the stronger power, from the intrusion of European sovereignties. She can point with proud satisfaction to the fact that over and over again has she declared effectively that serious indeed would be the consequences if an European hostile foot should, without just cause, tread those states in the New World which have emancipated themselves from European control. She has announced that she would cherish as it becomes her the territorial rights of the feeblest of those states, regarding them not merely as in the eye of the law equal to even the greatest of nationalities, but in view of her distinctive policy as entitled to be regarded by her as the objects of a peculiarly gracious care. I feel bound to say that if we should sanction by reprisals in Hayti the ruthless invasion of her territory and insult to her sovereignty which the facts now before us disclose, if we approve by solemn Executive action and Congressional assent that invasion, it will be difficult for us hereafter to assert that in the New World, of whose rights we are the peculiar guardians, these rights have never been invaded by ourselves."

The foregoing enumeration not only shows the many instances wherein the rule in question has been affirmed and applied, but also demonstrates that the Venezuelan boundary controversy is in any view far within the scope and spirit of the rule as uniformly accepted and acted upon. A doctrine of American public law thus long and firmly established and supported could not easily be ignored in a proper case for its application, even were the considerations upon which it is founded obscure or questionable. No such objection can be made, however, to the Monroe doctrine understood and defined in the manner already stated. It rests, on the contrary, upon facts and principles that are both intelligible and incontrovertible. That distance and three

thousand miles of intervening ocean make any permanent political union between an European and an American state unnatural and inexpedient will hardly be denied. But physical and geographical considerations are the least of the objections to such a union. Europe, as Washington observed, has a set of primary interests which are peculiar to herself. America is not interested in them and ought not to be vexed or complicated with them. Each great European power, for instance, to-day maintains enormous armies and fleets in self-defence and for protection against any other European power or powers. What have the states of America to do with that condition of things, or why should they be impoverished by wars or preparations for wars with whose causes or results they can have no direct concern? If all Europe were to suddenly fly to arms over the fate of Turkey, would it not be preposterous that any American state should find itself inextricably involved in the miseries and burdens of the contest? If it were, it would prove to be a partnership in the cost and losses of the struggle but not in any ensuing benefits.

What is true of the material is no less true of what may be termed the moral interests involved. Those pertaining to Europe are peculiar to her and are entirely diverse from those pertaining and peculiar to America. Europe as a whole is monarchical, and, with the single important exception of the Republic of France, is committed to the monarchical principle. America, on the other hand, is devoted to the exactly opposite principle—to the idea that every people has an inalienable right of self-government—and, in the United States of America, has furnished to the world the most conspicuous and conclusive example and proof of the excellence of free institutions, whether from the standpoint of national greatness or of individual happiness. It cannot be necessary, however, to enlarge upon this phase of the subject—whether moral or material interests be considered, it cannot but be universally conceded that those of Europe are irreconcilably diverse from those of America, and that any European control of the latter is necessarily both incongruous and injurious. If, however, for the reasons stated the forcible intrusion of European powers into American politics is to be deprecated—if, as it is to be deprecated, it should be resisted and prevented—such resistance and prevention must come from the United States. They would come from it, of course, were it made the point of attack. But, if they come at all, they must also come from it when any other American state is attacked,



since only the United States has the strength adequate to the exigency.

Is it true, then, that the safety and welfare of the United States are so concerned with the maintenance of the independence of every American state as against any European power as to justify and require the interposition of the United States whenever that independence is endangered? The question can be candidly answered in but one way. The states of America, South as well as North, by geographical proximity, by natural sympathy, by similarity of governmental constitutions, are friends and allies, commercially and politically, of the United States. To allow the subjugation of any of them by an European power is, of course, to completely reverse that situation and signifies the loss of all the advantages incident to their natural relations to us. But that is not all. The people of the United States have a vital interest in the cause of popular self-government. They have secured the right for themselves and their posterity at the cost of infinite blood and treasure. They have realized and exemplified its beneficent operation by a career unexampled in point of national greatness or individual felicity. They believe it to be for the healing of all nations, and that civilization must either advance or retrograde accordingly as its supremacy is extended or curtailed. Imbued with these sentiments, the people of the United States might not impossibly be wrought up to an active propaganda in favor of a cause so highly valued both for themselves and for mankind. But the age of the Crusades has passed, and they are content with such assertion and defence of the right of popular self-government as their own security and welfare demand. It is in that view more than in any other that they believe it not to be tolerated that the political control of an American state shall be forcibly assumed by an European power.

The mischiefs apprehended from such a source are none the less real because not immediately imminent in any specific case, and are none the less to be guarded against because the combination of circumstances that will bring them upon us cannot be predicted. The civilized states of Christendom deal with each other on substantially the same principles that regulate the conduct of individuals. The greater its enlightenment, the more surely every state perceives that its permanent interests require it to be governed by the immutable principles of right and justice. Each, nevertheless, is only too liable to succumb to the temptations offered by seeming special opportunities for its own

aggrandizement, and each would rashly imperil its own safety were it not to remember that for the regard and respect of other states it must be largely dependent upon its own strength and power. To-day the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition. Why? It is not because of the pure friendship or good-will felt for it. It is not simply by reason of its high character as a civilized state, nor because wisdom and justice and equity are the invariable characteristics of the dealings of the United States. It is because, in addition to all other grounds, its infinite resources combined with its isolated position render it master of the situation and practically invulnerable as against any or all other powers.

All the advantages of this superiority are at once imperilled if the principle be admitted that European powers may convert American states into colonies or provinces of their own. The principle would be eagerly availed of, and every power doing so would immediately acquire a base of military operations against us. What one power was permitted to do could not be denied to another, and it is not inconceivable that the struggle now going on for the acquisition of Africa might be transferred to South America. If it were, the weaker countries would unquestionably be soon absorbed, while the ultimate result might be the partition of all South America between the various European powers. The disastrous consequences to the United States of such a condition of things are obvious. The loss of prestige, of authority, and of weight in the councils of the family of nations would be among the least of them. Our only real rivals in peace as well as enemies in war would be found located at our very doors. Thus far in our history we have been spared the burdens and evils of immense standing armies and all the other accessories of huge warlike establishments, and the exemption has largely contributed to our national greatness and wealth as well as to the happiness of every citizen. But, with the powers of Europe permanently encamped on American soil, the ideal conditions we have thus far enjoyed cannot be expected to continue. We too must be armed to the teeth, we too must convert the flower of our male population into soldiers and sailors, and by withdrawing them from the various pursuits of peaceful industry we too must practically annihilate a large share of the productive energy of the nation.

How a greater calamity than this could overtake us it is difficult to see. Nor are our just apprehensions to be allayed by suggestions of

the friendliness of European powers—of their good-will towards us—of their disposition, should they be our neighbors, to dwell with us in peace and harmony. The people of the United States have learned in the school of experience to what extent the relations of states to each other depend not upon sentiment nor principle, but upon selfish interest. They will not soon forget that, in their hour of distress, all their anxieties and burdens were aggravated by the possibility of demonstrations against their national life on the part of powers with whom they had long maintained the most harmonious relations. They have yet in mind that France seized upon the apparent opportunity of our civil war to set up a monarchy in the adjoining state of Mexico. They realize that had France and Great Britain held important South American possessions to work from and to benefit, the temptation to destroy the predominance of the Great Republic in this hemisphere by furthering its dismemberment might have been irresistible. From that grave peril they have been saved in the past and may be saved again in the future through the operation of the sure but silent force of the doctrine proclaimed by President Monroe. To abandon it, on the other hand, disregarding both the logic of the situation and the facts of our past experience, would be to renounce a policy which has proved both an easy defence against foreign aggression and a prolific source of internal progress and prosperity.

There is, then, a doctrine of American public law, well founded in principle and abundantly sanctioned by precedent, which entitles and requires the United States to treat as an injury to itself the forcible assumption by an European power of political control over an American state. The application of the doctrine to the boundary dispute between Great Britain and Venezuela remains to be made, and presents no real difficulty. Though the dispute relates to a boundary line, yet, as it is between states, it necessarily imports political control to be lost by one party and gained by the other. The political control at stake, too, is of no mean importance, but concerns a domain of great extent—the British claim, it will be remembered, apparently expanded in two years some 33,000 square miles—and, if it also directly involves the command of the mouth of the Orinoco, is of immense consequence in connection with the whole river navigation of the interior of South America. It has been intimated, indeed, that in respect of these South American possessions Great Britain is herself an American state like any other, so that a controversy between her and Venezuela is to be settled between

themselves as if it were between Venezuela and Brazil or between Venezuela and Colombia, and does not call for or justify United States intervention. If this view be tenable at all, the logical sequence is plain.

Great Britain as a South American state is to be entirely differentiated from Great Britain generally, and if the boundary question cannot be settled otherwise than by force, British Guiana, with her own independent resources and not those of the British Empire, should be left to settle the matter with Venezuela—an arrangement which very possibly Venezuela might not object to. But the proposition that an European power with an American dependency is for the purposes of the Monroe doctrine to be classed not as an European but as an American state will not admit of serious discussion. If it were to be adopted, the Monroe doctrine would be too valueless to be worth asserting. Not only would every European power now having a South American colony be enabled to extend its possessions on this continent indefinitely, but any other European power might also do the same by first taking pains to procure a fraction of South American soil by voluntary cession.

The declaration of the Monroe message—that existing colonies or dependencies of an European power would not be interfered with by the United States—means colonies or dependencies then existing, with their limits as then existing. So it has been invariably construed, and so it must continue to be construed unless it is to be deprived of all vital force. Great Britain cannot be deemed a South American state within the purview of the Monroe doctrine, nor, if she is appropriating Venezuelan territory, is it material that she does so by advancing the frontier of an old colony instead of by the planting of a new colony. The difference is matter of form and not of substance, and the doctrine if pertinent in the one case must be in the other also. It is not admitted, however, and therefore cannot be assumed, that Great Britain is in fact usurping dominion over Venezuelan territory. While Venezuela charges such usurpation, Great Britain denies it, and the United States, until the merits are authoritatively ascertained, can take sides with neither. But while this is so—while the United States may not, under existing circumstances at least, take upon itself to say which of the two parties is right and which wrong—it is certainly within its right to demand that the truth shall be ascertained. Being entitled to resent and resist any sequestration of Venezuelan soil by Great Britain, it is necessarily

entitled to know whether such sequestration has occurred or is now going on. Otherwise, if the United States is without the right to know and have it determined whether there is or is not British aggression upon Venezuelan territory, its right to protest against or repel such aggression may be dismissed from consideration.

The right to act upon a fact the existence of which there is no right to have ascertained is simply illusory. It being clear, therefore, that the United States may legitimately insist upon the merits of the boundary question being determined, it is equally clear that there is but one feasible mode of determining them—viz., peaceful arbitration. The impracticability of any conventional adjustment has been often and thoroughly demonstrated. Even more impossible of consideration is an appeal to arms—a mode of settling national pretensions unhappily not yet wholly obsolete. If, however, it were not condemnable as a relic of barbarism and a crime in itself, so one-sided a contest could not be invited nor even accepted by Great Britain without distinct disparagement to her character as a civilized state. Great Britain, however, assumes no such attitude. On the contrary, she both admits that there is a controversy and that arbitration should be resorted to for its adjustment. But, while up to that point her attitude leaves nothing to be desired, its practical effect is completely nullified by her insistence that the submission shall cover but a part of the controversy—that, as a condition of arbitrating her right to a part of the disputed territory, the remainder shall be turned over to her. If it were possible to point to a boundary which both parties had ever agreed or assumed to be such either expressly or tacitly, the demand that territory conceded by such line to British Guiana should be held not to be in dispute might rest upon a reasonable basis. But there is no such line. The territory which Great Britain insists shall be ceded to her as a condition of arbitrating her claim to other territory has never been admitted to belong to her. It has always and consistently been claimed by Venezuela.

Upon what principle—except her feebleness as a nation—is she to be denied the right of having the claim heard and passed upon by an impartial tribunal? No reason nor shadow of reason appears in all the voluminous literature of the subject. "It is to be so because I will it to be so" seems to be the only justification Great Britain offers. It is, indeed, intimated that the British claim to this particular territory rests upon an occupation, which, whether acquiesced in or not, has ripened into a perfect title by long continuance. But what prescription

affecting territorial rights can be said to exist as between sovereign states? Or, if there is any, what is the legitimate consequence? It is not that all arbitration should be denied, but only that the submission should embrace an additional topic—namely, the validity of the asserted prescriptive title either in point of law or in point of fact. No different result follows from the contention that as matter of principle Great Britain cannot be asked to submit, and ought not to submit, to arbitration her political and sovereign rights over territory. This contention, if applied to the whole or to a vital part of the possessions of a sovereign state, need not be controverted. To hold otherwise might be equivalent to holding that a sovereign state was bound to arbitrate its very existence.

But Great Britain has herself shown in various instances that the principle has no pertinency when either the interests or the territorial area involved are not of controlling magnitude, and her loss of them as the result of an arbitration cannot appreciably affect her honor or her power. Thus, she has arbitrated the extent of her colonial possessions twice with the United States, twice with Portugal, and once with Germany, and perhaps in other instances. The Northwest Water Boundary arbitration of 1872 between her and this country is an example in point, and well illustrates both the effect to be given to long-continued use and enjoyment and the fact that a truly great power sacrifices neither prestige nor dignity by reconsidering the most emphatic rejection of a proposition when satisfied of the obvious and intrinsic justice of the case. By the award of the Emperor of Germany, the arbitrator in that case, the United States acquired San Juan and a number of smaller islands near the coast of Vancouver as a consequence of the decision that the term "the channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's Island," as used in the treaty of Washington of 1846, meant the Haro channel and not the Rosario channel. Yet a leading contention of Great Britain before the arbitrator was that equity required a judgment in her favor, because a decision in favor of the United States would deprive British subjects of rights of navigation of which they had had the habitual enjoyment from the time when the Rosario Strait was first explored and surveyed in 1798. So, though by virtue of the award the United States acquired San Juan and the other islands of the group to which it belongs, the British Foreign Secretary had in 1859 instructed the British Minister at Washington as follows:

"Her Majesty's Government must, therefore, under any circumstances, maintain the right of the British Crown to the Island of San Juan. The interests at stake in connection with the retention of that Island are too important to admit of compromise, and Your Lordship will consequently bear in mind that, whatever arrangement as to the boundary line is finally arrived at, no settlement of the question will be accepted by Her Majesty's Government which does not provide for the Island of San Juan being reserved to the British Crown."

Thus, as already intimated, the British demand that her right to a portion of the disputed territory shall be acknowledged before she will consent to an arbitration as to the rest seems to stand upon nothing but her own *ipse dixit*. She says to Venezuela, in substance: "You can get none of the debatable land by force, because you are not strong enough; you can get none by treaty, because I will not agree; and you can take your chance of getting a portion by arbitration, only if you first agree to abandon to me such other portion as I may designate." It is not perceived how such an attitude can be defended, nor how it is reconcilable with that love of justice and fair play so eminently characteristic of the English race. It in effect deprives Venezuela of her free agency and puts her under virtual duress. Territory acquired by reason of it will be as much wrested from her by the strong hand as if occupied by British troops or covered by British fleets. It seems, therefore, quite impossible that this position of Great Britain should be assented to by the United States, or that, if such position be adhered to with the result of enlarging the bounds of British Guiana, it should not be regarded as amounting, in substance, to an invasion and conquest of Venezuelan territory.

In these circumstances, the duty of the President appears to him unmistakable and imperative. Great Britain's assertion of title to the disputed territory combined with her refusal to have that title investigated being a substantial appropriation of the territory to her own use, not to protest and give warning that the transaction will be regarded as injurious to the interests of the people of the United States as well as oppressive in itself would be to ignore an established policy with which the honor and welfare of this country are closely identified. While the measures necessary or proper for the vindication of that policy are to be determined by another branch of the Government, it is clearly for the Executive to leave nothing undone which may tend to render such determination unnecessary.

You are instructed, therefore, to present the foregoing views to Lord

Salisbury by reading to him this communication (leaving with him a copy should he so desire), and to reinforce them by such pertinent considerations as will doubtless occur to you. They call for a definite decision upon the point whether Great Britain will consent or will decline to submit the Venezuelan boundary question in its entirety to impartial arbitration. It is the earnest hope of the President that the conclusion will be on the side of arbitration, and that Great Britain will add one more to the conspicuous precedents she has already furnished in favor of that wise and just mode of adjusting international disputes. If he is to be disappointed in that hope, however—a result not to be anticipated and in his judgment calculated to greatly embarrass the future relations between this country and Great Britain—it is his wish to be made acquainted with the fact at such early date as will enable him to lay the whole subject before Congress in his next annual message.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

RICHARD OLNEY.

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*Mr. Adee to Mr. Bayard.*

No. 806.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

*Washington, July 24, 1895.*

His Excellency THOMAS F. BAYARD,

*Etc., etc., etc., London.*

SIR,—In Mr. Olney's instruction No. 804, of the 20th instant, in relation to the Anglo-Venezuelan boundary dispute, you will note a reference to the sudden increase of the area claimed for British Guiana, amounting to 33,000 square miles, between 1884 and 1886. This statement is made on the authority of the British publication entitled the *Statesman's Year-Book*.

I add for your better information that the same statement is found in the *British Colonial Office List*, a government publication.

In the issue for 1885 the following passage occurs, on page 24, under the head of British Guiana :

"It is impossible to specify the exact area of the Colony, as its precise boundaries between Venezuela and Brazil respectively are undetermined, but it has been computed to be 76,000 square miles."

In the issue of the same List for 1886 the same statement occurs, on page 33, with the change of area to "about 109,000 square miles."



The official maps in the two volumes mentioned are identical, so that the increase of 33,000 square miles claimed for British Guiana is not thereby explained, but later *Colonial Office List* maps show a varying sweep of the boundary westward into what previously figured as Venezuelan territory, while no change is noted on the Brazilian frontier.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

ALVEY A. ADEE,  
*Acting Secretary.*

*Lord Salisbury to Sir Julian Pauncefoot.*

No. 189.]

FOREIGN OFFICE,  
November 26, 1895.

SIR,—On the 7th August I transmitted to Lord Gough a copy of the despatch from Mr. Olney which Mr. Bayard had left with me that day, and of which he had read portions to me. I informed him at the time that it could not be answered until it had been carefully considered by the Law Officers of the Crown. I have therefore deferred replying to it till after the recess.

I will not now deal with those portions of it which are concerned exclusively with the controversy that has for some time past existed between the Republic of Venezuela and Her Majesty's Government in regard to the boundary which separates their dominions. I take a very different view from Mr. Olney of various matters upon which he touches in that part of the despatch; but I will defer for the present all observations upon it, as it concerns matters which are not in themselves of first-rate importance, and do not directly concern the relations between Great Britain and the United States.

The latter part, however, of the despatch, turning from the question of the frontiers of Venezuela, proceeds to deal with principles of a far wider character, and to advance doctrines of international law which are of considerable interest to all the nations whose dominions include any portion of the Western Hemisphere.

The contentions set forth by Mr. Olney in this part of his despatch are represented by him as being an application of the political maxims which are well known in American discussion under the name of the Monroe doctrine. As far as I am aware, this doctrine has never been before advanced on behalf of the United States in any written communication addressed to the Government of another nation; but it has

been generally adopted and assumed as true by many eminent writers and politicians in the United States. It is said to have largely influenced the Government of that country in the conduct of its foreign affairs: though Mr. Clayton, who was Secretary of State under President Taylor, expressly stated that that Administration had in no way adopted it. But during the period that has elapsed since the Message of President Monroe was delivered in 1823, the doctrine has undergone a very notable development, and the aspect which it now presents in the hands of Mr. Olney differs widely from its character when it first issued from the pen of its author. The two propositions which in effect President Monroe laid down were, first, that America was no longer to be looked upon as a field for European colonization; and, secondly, that Europe must not attempt to extend its political system to America, or to control the political condition of any of the American communities who had recently declared their independence.

The dangers against which President Monroe thought it right to guard were not as imaginary as they would seem at the present day. The formation of the Holy Alliance; the Congresses of Laybach and Verona; the invasion of Spain by France for the purpose of forcing upon the Spanish people a form of government which seemed likely to disappear unless it was sustained by external aid, were incidents fresh in the mind of President Monroe when he penned his celebrated Message. The system of which he speaks, and of which he so resolutely deprecates the application to the American Continent, was the system then adopted by certain powerful States upon the Continent of Europe of combining to prevent by force of arms the adoption in other countries of political institutions which they disliked, and to uphold by external pressure those which they approved. Various portions of South America had recently declared their independence, and that independence had not been recognized by the Governments of Spain and Portugal, to which, with small exception, the whole of Central and South America were nominally subject. It was not an imaginary danger that he foresaw, if he feared that the same spirit which had dictated the French expedition in Spain might inspire the more powerful Governments of Europe with the idea of imposing, by the force of European arms, upon the South American communities the form of government and the political connection which they had thrown off. In declaring that the United States would resist any such enterprise if it was contemplated, President Monroe adopted a

policy which received the entire sympathy of the English Government of that date.

The dangers which were apprehended by President Monroe have no relation to the state of things in which we live at the present day. There is no danger of any Holy Alliance imposing its system upon any portion of the American Continent, and there is no danger of any European State treating any part of the American Continent as a fit object for European colonization. It is intelligible that Mr. Olney should invoke, in defence of the views on which he is now insisting, an authority which enjoys so high a popularity with his own fellow-countrymen. But the circumstances with which President Monroe was dealing, and those to which the present American Government is addressing itself, have very few features in common. Great Britain is imposing no "system" upon Venezuela, and is not concerning herself in any way with the nature of the political institutions under which the Venezuelans may prefer to live. But the British Empire and the Republic of Venezuela are neighbors, and they have differed for some time past, and continue to differ, as to the line by which their dominions are separated. It is a controversy with which the United States have no apparent practical concern. It is difficult, indeed, to see how it can materially affect any State or community outside those primarily interested, except perhaps other parts of Her Majesty's dominions, such as Trinidad. The disputed frontier of Venezuela has nothing to do with any of the questions dealt with by President Monroe. It is not a question of the colonization by a European Power of any portion of America. It is not a question of the imposition upon the communities of South America of any system of government devised in Europe. It is simply the determination of the frontier of a British possession which belonged to the Throne of England long before the Republic of Venezuela came into existence. But even if the interests of Venezuela were so far linked to those of the United States as to give to the latter a *locus standi* in this controversy, their Government apparently have not formed, and certainly do not express, any opinion upon the actual merits of the dispute. The Government of the United States do not say that Great Britain, or that Venezuela, is in the right in the matters that are in issue. But they lay down that the doctrine of President Monroe, when he opposed the imposition of European systems, or the renewal of European colonization, confers upon them the right of demanding that when a European Power has a

frontier difference with a South American community, the European Power shall consent to refer that controversy to arbitration; and Mr. Olney states that unless Her Majesty's Government accede to this demand, it will "greatly embarrass the future relations between Great Britain and the United States."

Whatever may be the authority of the doctrine laid down by President Monroe, there is nothing in his language to show that he ever thought of claiming this novel prerogative for the United States. It is admitted that he did not seek to assert a Protectorate over Mexico, or the States of Central and South America. Such a claim would have imposed upon the United States the duty of answering for the conduct of these States, and consequently the responsibility of controlling it. His sagacious foresight would have led him energetically to deprecate the addition of so serious a burden to those which the Rulers of the United States have to bear. It follows of necessity that if the Government of the United States will not control the conduct of these communities, neither can it undertake to protect them from the consequences attaching to any misconduct of which they may be guilty towards other nations. If they violate in any way the rights of another State, or of its subjects, it is not alleged that the Monroe doctrine will assure them the assistance of the United States in escaping from any reparation which they may be bound by international law to give. Mr. Olney expressly disclaims such an inference from the principles he lays down.

But the claim which he founds upon them is that, if any independent American State advances a demand for territory of which its neighbor claims to be the owner, and that neighbor is the colony of a European State, the United States have a right to insist that the European State shall submit the demand and its own impugned rights to arbitration.

I will not now enter into a discussion of the merits of this method of terminating international differences. It has proved itself valuable in many cases; but it is not free from defects, which often operate as a serious drawback on its value. It is not always easy to find an Arbitrator who is competent, and who, at the same time, is wholly free from bias; and the task of insuring compliance with the Award when it is made is not exempt from difficulty. It is a mode of settlement of which the value varies much according to the nature of the controversy to which it is applied, and the character of the litigants

who appeal to it. Whether, in any particular case, it is a suitable method of procedure is generally a delicate and difficult question. The only parties who are competent to decide that question are the two parties whose rival contentions are in issue. The claim of a third nation, which is unaffected by the controversy, to impose this particular procedure on either of the two others, cannot be reasonably justified, and has no foundation in the law of nations.

In the remarks which I have made I have argued on the theory that the Monroe doctrine in itself is sound. I must not, however, be understood as expressing any acceptance of it on the part of Her Majesty's Government. It must always be mentioned with respect, on account of the distinguished statesman to whom it is due, and the great nation who have generally adopted it. But international law is founded on the general consent of nations; and no statesman, however eminent, and no nation, however powerful, are competent to insert into the code of international law a novel principle which was never recognized before, and which has not since been accepted by the Government of any other country. The United States have a right, like any other nation, to interpose in any controversy by which their own interests are affected; and they are the judge whether those interests are touched, and in what measure they should be sustained. But their rights are in no way strengthened or extended by the fact that the controversy affects some territory which is called American. Mr. Olney quotes the case of the recent Chilian war, in which the United States declined to join with France and England in an effort to bring hostilities to a close, on account of the Monroe doctrine. The United States were entirely in their right in declining to join in an attempt at pacification if they thought fit; but Mr. Olney's principle that "American questions are for American decision," even if it receive any countenance from the language of President Monroe (which it does not), cannot be sustained by any reasoning drawn from the law of nations.

The Government of the United States is not entitled to affirm as a universal proposition, with reference to a number of independent States for whose conduct it assumes no responsibility, that its interests are necessarily concerned in whatever may befall those States simply because they are situated in the Western Hemisphere. It may well be that the interests of the United States are affected by something that happens to Chili or to Peru, and that that circumstance may give them the right of interference; but such a contingency may equally happen

in the case of China or Japan, and the right of interference is not more extensive or more assured in the one case than in the other.

Though the language of President Monroe is directed to the attainment of objects which most Englishmen would agree to be salutary, it is impossible to admit that they have been inscribed by any adequate authority in the code of international law; and the danger which such admission would involve is sufficiently exhibited both by the strange development which the doctrine has received at Mr. Olney's hands, and the arguments by which it is supported, in the despatch under reply. In defence of it he says:

"That distance and 3,000 miles of intervening ocean *make any permanent political union between a European and an American State unnatural and inexpedient* will hardly be denied. But physical and geographical considerations are the least of the objections to such a union. Europe has a set of primary interests which are peculiar to herself; America is not interested in them, and ought not to be vexed or complicated with them."

And, again:

"Thus far in our history we have been spared the burdens and evils of immense standing armies, and all the other accessories of huge warlike establishments; and the exemption has highly contributed to our national greatness and wealth, as well as to the happiness of every citizen. But *with the Powers of Europe permanently encamped on American soil*, the ideal conditions we have thus far enjoyed cannot be expected to continue."

The necessary meaning of these words is that the union between Great Britain and Canada; between Great Britain and Jamaica and Trinidad; between Great Britain and British Honduras or British Guiana are "inexpedient and unnatural." President Monroe disclaims any such inference from his doctrine; but in this, as in other respects, Mr. Olney develops it. He lays down that the inexpedient and unnatural character of the union between a European and an American State is so obvious that it "will hardly be denied." Her Majesty's Government are prepared emphatically to deny it on behalf of both the British and American people who are subject to her Crown. They maintain that the union between Great Britain and her territories in the Western Hemisphere is both natural and expedient. They fully concur with the view which President Monroe apparently entertained, that any disturbance of the existing territorial distribution in that hemisphere by any fresh acquisitions on the part of any European State would be a highly inexpedient change. But they are not prepared to admit that the rec-

ognition of that expediency is clothed with the sanction which belongs to a doctrine of international law. They are not prepared to admit that the interests of the United States are necessarily concerned in every frontier dispute which may arise between any two of the States who possess dominion in the Western Hemisphere; and still less can they accept the doctrine that the United States are entitled to claim that the process of arbitration shall be applied to any demand for the surrender of territory which one of those States may make against another.

I have commented in the above remarks only upon the general aspect of Mr. Olney's doctrines, apart from the special considerations which attach to the controversy between the United Kingdom and Venezuela in its present phase. This controversy has undoubtedly been made more difficult by the inconsiderate action of the Venezuelan Government in breaking off relations with Her Majesty's Government, and its settlement has been correspondingly delayed; but Her Majesty's Government have not surrendered the hope that it will be adjusted by a reasonable arrangement at an early date.

I request that you will read the substance of the above despatch to Mr. Olney, and leave him a copy if he desires it.

S.

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*Lord Salisbury to Sir Julian Pauncefote.*

No. 190.]

FOREIGN OFFICE,

*November 26, 1895.*

SIR,—In my preceding despatch of to-day's date I have replied only to the latter portion of Mr. Olney's despatch of the 20th July last, which treats of the application of the Monroe doctrine to the question of the boundary dispute between Venezuela and the colony of British Guiana. But it seems desirable, in order to remove some evident misapprehensions as to the main features of the question, that the statement of it contained in the earlier portion of Mr. Olney's despatch should not be left without reply. Such a course will be the more convenient, because, in consequence of the suspension of diplomatic relations, I shall not have the opportunity of setting right misconceptions of this kind in the ordinary way in a despatch addressed to the Venezuelan Government itself.

Her Majesty's Government, while they have never avoided or de-

clined argument on the subject with the Government of Venezuela, have always held that the question was one which had no direct bearing on the material interests of any other country, and have consequently refrained hitherto from presenting any detailed statement of their case either to the United States or to other foreign Governments.

It is, perhaps, a natural consequence of this circumstance that Mr. Olney's narration of what has passed bears the impress of being mainly, if not entirely, founded on *ex parte* statements emanating from Venezuela, and gives, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, an erroneous view of many material facts.

Mr. Olney commences his observations by remarking that "the dispute is of ancient date, and began at least as early as the time when Great Britain acquired by the Treaty with the Netherlands in 1814 the establishments of Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice. From that time to the present the dividing line between these establishments, now called British Guiana, and Venezuela has never ceased to be subject of contention."

This statement is founded on misconception. The dispute on the subject of the frontier did not, in fact, commence till after the year 1840.

The title of Great Britain to the territory in question is derived, in the first place, from conquest and military occupation of the Dutch settlements in 1796. Both on this occasion, and at the time of a previous occupation of those settlements in 1781, the British authorities marked the western boundary of their possessions as beginning some distance up the Orinoco beyond Point Barima, in accordance with the limits claimed and actually held by the Dutch, and this has always since remained the frontier claimed by Great Britain. The definite cession of the Dutch settlements to England was, as Mr. Olney states, placed on record by the Treaty of 1814, and although the Spanish Government were parties to the negotiations which led to that Treaty, they did not at any stage of them raise objection to the frontiers claimed by Great Britain, though these were perfectly well known to them. At that time the Government of Venezuela had not been recognized even by the United States, though the province was already in revolt against the Spanish Government, and had declared its independence. No question of frontier was raised with Great Britain either by it or by the Government of the United States of Colombia, in which it became merged in 1819. That Government, indeed, on repeated occasions, acknowl-



edged its indebtedness to Great Britain for her friendly attitude. When in 1830 the Republic of Venezuela assumed a separate existence its Government was equally warm in its expressions of gratitude and friendship, and there was not at the time any indication of an intention to raise such claims as have been urged by it during the latter portion of this century.

It is true, as stated by Mr. Olney, that, in the Venezuelan Constitution of 1830, Article 5 lays down that "the territory of Venezuela comprises all that which previously to the political changes of 1810 was denominated the Captaincy-General of Venezuela." Similar declarations had been made in the fundamental laws promulgated in 1819 and 1821.

I need not point out that a declaration of this kind made by a newly self-constituted State can have no valid force as against international arrangements previously concluded by the nation from which it has separated itself.

But the present difficulty would never have arisen if the Government of Venezuela had been content to claim only those territories which could be proved or even reasonably asserted to have been practically in the possession and under the effective jurisdiction of the Captaincy-General of Venezuela.

There is no authoritative statement by the Spanish Government of those territories, for a Decree which the Venezuelan Government alleges to have been issued by the King of Spain in 1768, describing the Province of Guiana as bordered on the south by the Amazon and on the east by the Atlantic, certainly cannot be regarded as such. It absolutely ignores the Dutch settlements, which not only existed in fact, but had been formally recognized by the Treaty of Münster of 1648, and it would, if now considered valid, transfer to Venezuela the whole of the British, Dutch, and French Guianas, and an enormous tract of territory belonging to Brazil.

But of the territories claimed and actually occupied by the Dutch, which were those acquired from them by Great Britain, there exist the most authentic declarations. In 1759, and again in 1769, the States-General of Holland addressed formal remonstrances to the Court of Madrid against the incursions of the Spaniards into their posts and settlements in the basin of the Cuyuni. In these remonstrances they distinctly claimed all the branches of the Essequibo River, and, especially, the Cuyuni River, as lying within Dutch territory.

They demanded immediate reparation for the proceedings of the Spaniards and reinstatement of the posts said to have been injured by them, and suggested that a proper delineation between the Colony of Essequibo and the Rio Orinoco should be laid down by authority.

To this claim the Spanish Government never attempted to make any reply. But it is evident from the archives which are preserved in Spain, and to which, by the courtesy of the Spanish Government, reference has been made, that the Council of State did not consider that they had the means of rebutting it, and that neither they nor the Governor of Cumana were prepared seriously to maintain the claims which were suggested in reports from his subordinate officer, the Commandant of Guiana. These reports were characterized by the Spanish Ministers as insufficient and unsatisfactory, as "professing to show the Province of Guiana under too favorable a light," and finally by the Council of State as appearing from other information to be "very improbable." They form, however, with a map which accompanied them, the evidence on which the Venezuelan Government appear most to rely, though it may be observed that among other documents which have from time to time been produced or referred to by them in the course of the discussions is a Bull of Pope Alexander VI. in 1493, which, if it is to be considered as having any present validity, would take from the Government of the United States all title to jurisdiction on the Continent of North America. The fundamental principle underlying the Venezuelan argument is, in fact, that, inasmuch as Spain was originally entitled of right to the whole of the American Continent, any territory on that Continent which she cannot be shown to have acknowledged in positive and specific terms to have passed to another Power can only have been acquired by wrongful usurpation, and if situated to the north of the Amazon and west of the Atlantic must necessarily belong to Venezuela, as her self-constituted inheritor in those regions. It may reasonably be asked whether Mr. Olney would consent to refer to the arbitration of another Power pretensions raised by the Government of Mexico on such a foundation to large tracts of territory which had long been comprised in the Federation.

The circumstances connected with the marking of what is called the "Schomburgk" line are as follows:

In 1835 a grant was made by the British Government for the exploration of the interior of the British Colony, and Mr. (afterwards Sir Robert) Schomburgk, who was employed on this service, on his return to

the capital of the Colony in July, 1839, called the attention of the Government to the necessity for an early demarcation of its boundaries. He was in consequence appointed in November, 1840, Special Commissioner for provisionally surveying and delimiting the boundaries of British Guiana, and notice of the appointment was given to the Governments concerned, including that of Venezuela.

The intention of Her Majesty's Government at that time was, when the work of the Commissioner had been completed, to communicate to the other Governments their views as to the true boundary of the British Colony, and then to settle any details to which those Governments might take objection.

It is important to notice that Sir R. Schomburgk did not discover or invent any new boundaries. He took particular care to fortify himself with the history of the case. He had further, from actual exploration and information obtained from the Indians, and from the evidence of local remains, as at Barima, and local traditions, as on the Cuyuni, fixed the limits of the Dutch possessions, and the zone from which all trace of Spanish influence was absent. On such data he based his reports.

At the very outset of his mission he surveyed Point Barima, where the remains of a Dutch fort still existed, and placed there and at the mouth of the Amacura two boundary posts. At the urgent entreaty of the Venezuelan Government these two posts were afterwards removed, as stated by Mr. Olney, but this concession was made on the distinct understanding that Great Britain did not thereby in any way abandon her claim to that position.

In submitting the maps of his survey, on which he indicated the line which he would propose to Her Majesty's Government for adoption, Sir R. Schomburgk called attention to the fact that Her Majesty's Government might justly claim the whole basin of the Cuyuni and Yuruari on the ground that the natural boundary of the Colony included any territory through which flow rivers which fall into the Essequibo. "Upon this principle," he wrote, "the boundary line would run from the sources of the Carumani towards the sources of the Cuyuni proper, and from thence towards its far more northern tributaries, the Rivers Iruary (Yuruari) and Iruang (Yuruan), and thus approach the very heart of Venezuelan Guiana." But, on grounds of complaisance towards Venezuela, he proposed that Great Britain should consent to surrender her claim to a more extended frontier inland in return for the

formal recognition of her right to Point Barima. It was on this principle that he drew the boundary line which has since been called by his name.

Undoubtedly, therefore, Mr. Olney is right when he states that "it seems impossible to treat the Schomburgk line as being the boundary claimed by Great Britain as matter of right, or as anything but a line originating in considerations of convenience and expediency." The Schomburgk line was in fact a great reduction of the boundary claimed by Great Britain as a matter of right, and its proposal originated in a desire to come to a speedy and friendly arrangement with a weaker Power with whom Great Britain was at the time, and desired to remain, in cordial relations.

The following are the main facts of the discussions that ensued with the Venezuelan Government:—

While Mr. Schomburgk was engaged on his survey the Venezuelan Minister in London had urged Her Majesty's Government to enter into a Treaty of Limits, but received the answer that, if it should be necessary to enter into such a Treaty, a survey was, at any rate, the necessary preliminary, and that this was proceeding.

As soon as Her Majesty's Government were in possession of Mr. Schomburgk's reports, the Venezuelan Minister was informed that they were in a position to commence negotiations, and in January, 1844, M. Fortique commenced by stating the claim of his Government.

This claim, starting from such obsolete grounds as the original discovery by Spain of the American Continent, and mainly supported by quotations of a more or less vague character from the writings of travellers and geographers, but adducing no substantial evidence of actual conquest or occupation of the territory claimed, demanded the Essequibo itself as the boundary of Venezuela.

A reply was returned by Lord Aberdeen, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, pointing out that it would be impossible to arrive at any agreement if both sides brought forward pretensions of so extreme a character, but stating that the British Government would not imitate M. Fortique in putting forward a claim which it could not be intended seriously to maintain. Lord Aberdeen then proceeded to announce the concessions which, "out of friendly regard to Venezuela," Her Majesty's Government were prepared to make, and proposed a line starting from the mouth of the Moroco to the junction of the River Barama with the Waini, thence up the Barama to the point at which

that stream approached nearest to the Acarabisi, and thence following Sir R. Schomburgk's line from the source of the Acarabisi onwards.

A condition was attached to the proffered cession—viz., that the Venezuelan Government should enter into an engagement that no portion of the territory proposed to be ceded should be alienated at any time to a foreign Power, and that the Indian tribes residing in it should be protected from oppression.

No answer to the note was ever received from the Venezuelan Government, and in 1850 Her Majesty's Government informed Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Carácas that as the proposal had remained for more than six years unaccepted, it must be considered as having lapsed, and authorized him to make a communication to the Venezuelan Government to that effect.

A report having at the time become current in Venezuela that Great Britain intended to seize Venezuelan Guiana, the British Government distinctly disclaimed such an intention, but inasmuch as the Government of Venezuela subsequently permitted projects to be set on foot for the occupation of Point Barima and certain other positions in dispute, the British Chargé d'Affaires was instructed in June, 1850, to call the serious attention of the President and Government of Venezuela to the question, and to declare to them "that, whilst, on the one hand, Great Britain had no intention to occupy or encroach on the disputed territory, she would not, on the other hand, view with indifference aggressions on that territory by Venezuela."

The Venezuelan Government replied in December of the same year that Venezuela had no intention of occupying or encroaching upon any part of the territory the dominion of which was in dispute, and that orders would be issued to the authorities in Guiana to abstain from taking any steps contrary to this engagement.

This constitutes what has been termed the "Agreement of 1850," to which the Government of Venezuela have frequently appealed, but which the Venezuelans have repeatedly violated in succeeding years.

Their first acts of this nature consisted in the occupation of fresh positions to the east of their previous settlements, and the founding in 1858 of the town of Nueva Providencia on the right bank of the Yu-ruari, all previous settlements being on the left bank. The British Government, however, considering that these settlements were so near positions which they had not wished to claim, considering also the diffi-

culty of controlling the movements of mining populations, overlooked this breach of the Agreement.

The Governor of the Colony was in 1857 sent to Carácas to negotiate for a settlement of the boundary, but he found the Venezuelan State in so disturbed a condition that it was impossible to commence negotiations, and eventually he came away without having effected anything.

For the next nineteen years, as stated by Mr. Olney, the civil commotions in Venezuela prevented any resumption of negotiations.

In 1876 it was reported that the Venezuelan Government had, for the second time, broken "the Agreement of 1850" by granting licenses to trade and cut wood in Barima and eastward. Later in the same year that Government once more made an overture for the settlement of the boundary. Various delays interposed before negotiations actually commenced; and it was not till 1879 that Señor Rojaz began them with a renewal of the claim to the Essequibo as the eastern boundary of Venezuelan Guiana. At the same time he stated that his Government wished "to obtain, by means of a Treaty, a definitive settlement of the question, and was disposed to proceed to the demarcation of the divisional line between the two Guianas in a spirit of conciliation and true friendship towards Her Majesty's Government."

In reply to this communication, a note was addressed to Señor Rojaz on the 10th January, 1880, reminding him that the boundary which Her Majesty's Government claimed, as a matter of strict right on grounds of conquest and concession by Treaty, commenced at a point at the mouth of the Orinoco, westward of Point Barima, that it proceeded thence in a southerly direction to the Imataca Mountains, the line of which it followed to the northwest, passing from thence by the high land of Santa Maria just south of the town of Upata, until it struck a range of hills on the eastern bank of the Caroni River, following these southwards until it struck the great backbone of the Guiana district, the Barima Mountains of British Guiana, and thence southwards to the Pacaraima Mountains. On the other hand, the claim which had been put forward on behalf of Venezuela by General Guzman Blanco in his message to the National Congress of the 20th February, 1877, would involve the surrender of a province now inhabited by 40,000 British subjects, and which had been in the uninterrupted possession of Holland and of Great Britain successively for two centuries. The difference between these two claims being so great, it was pointed out to Señor

Rojaz that, in order to arrive at a satisfactory arrangement, each party must be prepared to make very considerable concessions to the other, and he was assured that, although the claim of Venezuela to the Essequibo River boundary could not, under any circumstances, be entertained, yet that Her Majesty's Government were anxious to meet the Venezuelan Government in a spirit of conciliation, and would be willing, in the event of a renewal of negotiations for the general settlement of boundaries, to waive a portion of what they considered to be their strict rights if Venezuela were really disposed to make corresponding concessions on her part.

The Venezuelan Minister replied in February, 1881, by proposing a line which commenced on the coast a mile to the north of the Moroco River, and followed certain parallels and meridians inland, bearing a general resemblance to the proposal made by Lord Aberdeen in 1844.

Señor Rojaz's proposal was referred to the Lieutenant-Governor and Attorney-General of British Guiana, who were then in England, and they presented an elaborate Report, showing that in the thirty-five years which had elapsed since Lord Aberdeen's proposed concession, natives and others had settled in the territory under the belief that they would enjoy the benefits of British rule, and that it was impossible to assent to any such concessions as Señor Rojaz's line would involve. They, however, proposed an alternative line, which involved considerable reductions of that laid down by Sir R. Schomburgk.

This boundary was proposed to the Venezuelan Government by Lord Granville in September, 1881, but no answer was ever returned by that Government to the proposal.

While, however, the Venezuelan Minister constantly stated that the matter was under active consideration, it was found that in the same year a Concession had been given by his Government to General Pulgar, which included a large portion of the territory in dispute. This was the third breach by Venezuela of the Agreement of 1850.

Early in 1884 news arrived of a fourth breach by Venezuela of the Agreement of 1850, through two different grants which covered the whole of the territory in dispute, and as this was followed by actual attempts to settle on the disputed territory, the British Government could no longer remain inactive.

Warning was therefore given to the Venezuelan Government and to the concessionnaires, and a British Magistrate was sent into the threatened district to assert the British rights.

Meanwhile, the negotiations for a settlement of the boundary had continued, but the only replies that could be obtained from Señor Guzman Blanco, the Venezuelan Minister, were proposals for arbitration in different forms, all of which Her Majesty's Government were compelled to decline as involving a submission to the Arbitrator of the claim advanced by Venezuela in 1844 to all territory up to the left bank of the Essequibo.

As the progress of settlement by British subjects made a decision of some kind absolutely necessary, and as the Venezuelan Government refused to come to any reasonable arrangement, Her Majesty's Government decided not to repeat the offer of concessions which had not been reciprocated, but to assert their undoubted right to the territory within the Schomburgk line, while still consenting to hold open for further negotiation, and even for arbitration, the unsettled lands between that line and what they considered to be the rightful boundary, as stated in the note to Señor Rojaz of the 10th January, 1880.

The execution of this decision was deferred for a time, owing to the return of Señor Guzman Blanco to London, and the desire of Lord Rosebery, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to settle all pending questions between the two Governments. Mr. Olney is mistaken in supposing that in 1886 "a Treaty was practically agreed upon containing a general arbitration clause, under which the parties might have submitted the boundary dispute to the decision of a third Power, or of several Powers in amity with both." It is true that General Guzman Blanco proposed that the Commercial Treaty between the two countries should contain a clause of this nature, but it had reference to *future* disputes only. Her Majesty's Government have always insisted on a separate discussion of the frontier question, and have considered its settlement to be a necessary preliminary to other arrangements. Lord Rosebery's proposal made in July, 1886, was "that the two Governments should agree to consider the territory lying between the boundary lines respectively proposed in the 8th paragraph of Señor Rojaz's note of the 21st February, 1881, and in Lord Granville's note of the 15th September, 1881, as the territory in dispute between the two countries, and that a boundary line within the limits of this territory should be traced either by an Arbitrator or by a Joint Commission on the basis of an equal division of this territory, due regard being had to natural boundaries."

Señor Guzman Blanco replied declining the proposal, and repeating



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that arbitration, on the whole claim of Venezuela, was the only method of solution which he could suggest. This pretension is hardly less exorbitant than would be a refusal by Great Britain to agree to an arbitration on the boundary of British Columbia and Alaska, unless the United States would consent to bring into question one-half of the whole area of the latter territory. He shortly afterwards left England, and as there seemed no hope of arriving at an agreement by further discussions, the Schomburgk line was proclaimed as the irreducible boundary of the Colony in October, 1886. It must be borne in mind that in taking this step Her Majesty's Government did not assert anything approaching their extreme claim, but confined themselves within the limits of what had as early as 1840 been suggested as a concession out of friendly regard and complaisance.

When Señor Guzman Blanco, having returned to Venezuela, announced his intention of erecting a light-house at Point Barima, the British Government expressed their readiness to permit this if he would enter into a formal written agreement that its erection would not be held to prejudice their claim to the site.

In the meanwhile the Venezuelan Government had sent Commissioners into the territory to the east of the Schomburgk line, and on their return two notes were addressed to the British Minister at Carácas, dated respectively the 26th and 31st January, 1887, demanding the evacuation of the whole territory held by Great Britain from the mouth of the Orinoco to the Pomeroon River, and adding that should this not be done by the 20th February, and should the evacuation not be accompanied by the acceptance of arbitration as the means of deciding the pending frontier question, diplomatic relations would be broken off. In pursuance of this decision the British Representative at Carácas received his passports, and relations were declared by the Venezuelan Government to be suspended on the 21st February, 1887.

In December of that year, as a matter of precaution, and in order that the claims of Great Britain beyond the Schomburgk line might not be considered to have been abandoned, a notice was issued by the Governor of British Guiana formally reserving those claims. No steps have, however, at any time been taken by the British authorities to exercise jurisdiction beyond the Schomburgk line, nor to interfere with the proceedings of the Venezuelans in the territory outside of it, although, pending a settlement of the dispute, Great Britain cannot recognize those proceedings as valid, or as conferring any legitimate title.

The question has remained in this position ever since; the bases on which Her Majesty's Government were prepared to negotiate for its settlement were clearly indicated to the Venezuelan Plenipotentiaries who were successively despatched to London in 1890, 1891, and 1893 to negotiate for a renewal of diplomatic relations, but as on those occasions the only solutions which the Venezuelan Government professed themselves ready to accept would still have involved the submission to arbitration of the Venezuelan claim to a large portion of the British Colony, no progress has yet been made towards a settlement.

It will be seen from the preceding statement that the Government of Great Britain have from the first held the same view as to the extent of territory which they are entitled to claim as a matter of right. It comprised the coast-line up to the River Amacura, and the whole basin of the Essequibo River and its tributaries. A portion of that claim, however, they have always been willing to waive altogether; in regard to another portion, they have been and continue to be perfectly ready to submit the question of their title to arbitration. As regards the rest, that which lies within the so-called Schomburgk line, they do not consider that the rights of Great Britain are open to question. Even within that line they have, on various occasions, offered to Venezuela considerable concessions as a matter of friendship and conciliation, and for the purpose of securing an amicable settlement of the dispute. If as time has gone on the concessions thus offered diminished in extent, and have now been withdrawn, this has been the necessary consequence of the gradual spread over the country of British settlements, which Her Majesty's Government cannot in justice to the inhabitants offer to surrender to foreign rule, and the justice of such withdrawal is amply borne out by the researches in the national archives of Holland and Spain, which have furnished further and more convincing evidence in support of the British claims.

The discrepancies in the frontiers assigned to the British Colony in various maps published in England, and erroneously assumed to be founded on official information, are easily accounted for by the circumstances which I have mentioned. Her Majesty's Government cannot, of course, be responsible for such publications made without their authority.

Although the negotiations in 1890, 1891, and 1893 did not lead to any result, Her Majesty's Government have not abandoned the hope that they may be resumed with better success, and that when the internal

politics of Venezuela are settled on a more durable basis than has lately appeared to be the case, her Government may be enabled to adopt a more moderate and conciliatory course in regard to this question than that of their predecessors. Her Majesty's Government are sincerely desirous of being on friendly relations with Venezuela, and certainly have no design to seize territory that properly belongs to her, or forcibly to extend sovereignty over any portion of her population.

They have, on the contrary, repeatedly expressed their readiness to submit to arbitration the conflicting claims of Great Britain and Venezuela to large tracts of territory which from their auriferous nature are known to be of almost untold value. But they cannot consent to entertain, or to submit to the arbitration of another Power or of foreign jurists, however eminent, claims based on the extravagant pretensions of Spanish officials in the last century, and involving the transfer of large numbers of British subjects, who have for many years enjoyed the settled rule of a British Colony, to a nation of different race and language, whose political system is subject to frequent disturbance, and whose institutions as yet too often afford very inadequate protection to life and property. No issue of this description has ever been involved in the questions which Great Britain and the United States have consented to submit to arbitration, and Her Majesty's Government are convinced that in similar circumstances the Government of the United States would be equally firm in declining to entertain proposals of such a nature.

Your Excellency is authorized to state the substance of this despatch to Mr. Olney, and to leave him a copy of it if he should desire it.



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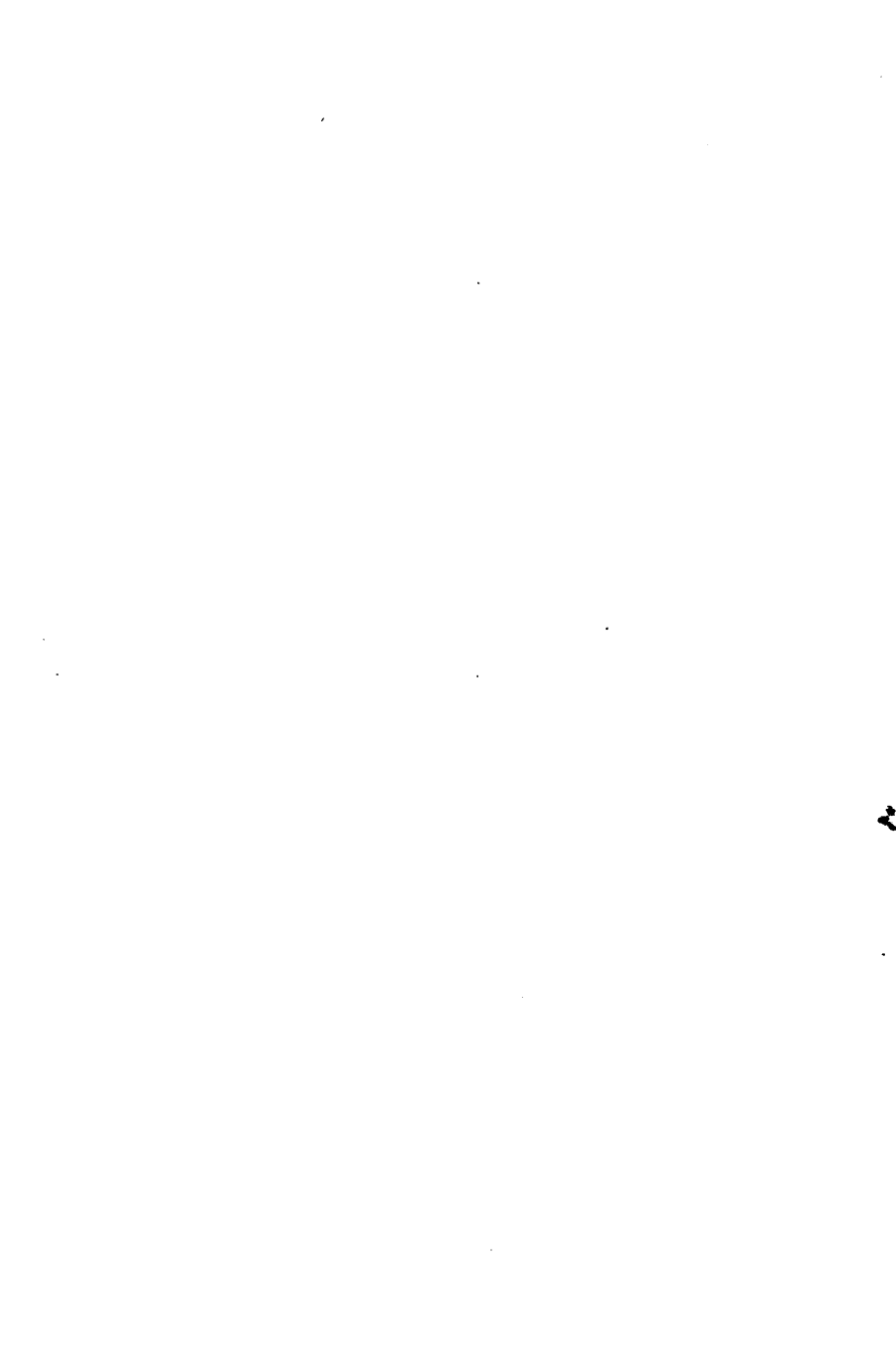
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